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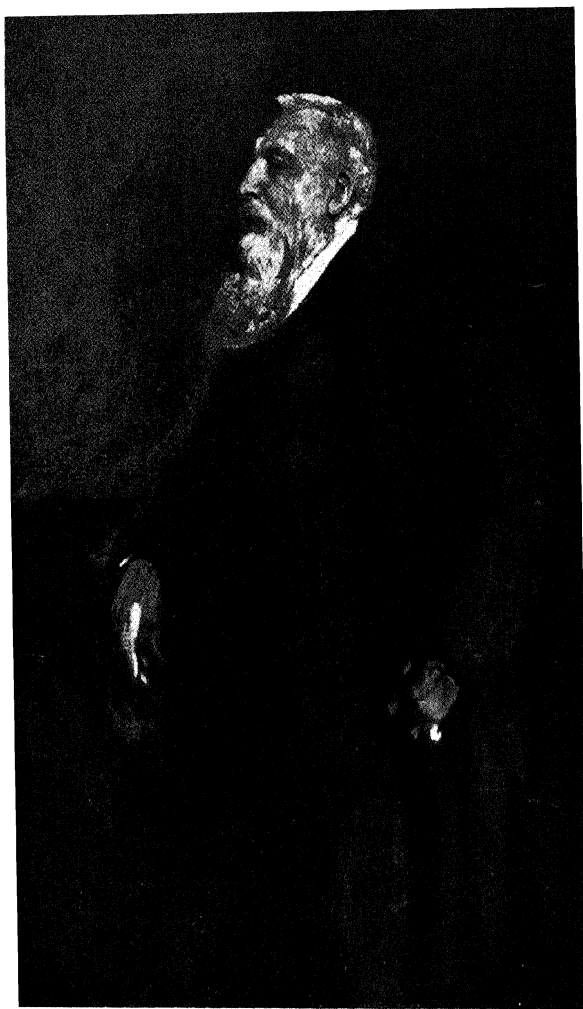












AUGUSTE RODIN BY JOHN LAVERY, A.R.A.

# RODIN

## IMMORTAL PEASANT

BY ANNE LESLIE

*With an Introduction by*

SIR JOHN LAVERY

*Illustrated with sixty-six reproductions*

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PRENTICE-HALL·INC·

NEW YORK

1937



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TO MY MOTHER AND FATHER

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*To*

THE DUKE OF WESTMINSTER

THE LATE ALFRED BOUCHER

MONSIEUR JACQUES BLANCHE

LORD HOWARD DE WALDEN

MISS EMILIE GRIGSBY

MISS AILSA TWEED

SIR JOHN LAVERY

LADY LESLIE

*and others who also had the privilege of knowing  
Rodin personally, the author makes grateful ac-  
knowledgment for invaluable assistance in securing  
new material, including many anecdotes.*

## *Introduction*

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THE YOUNG author of this book is the daughter of Shane Leslie, the writer—also the cousin of Winston Churchill and Clare Sheridan, the sculptress. This merely by way of introduction to the American public.

She has devoted herself to the artistic rather than the social side of life; and after a short period on the stage under the management of Mr. Charles Cochran, she turned to writing, specializing in biography, like her father.

She had gone to Paris as an inevitable part of her education, but was not content to struggle with French verbs and listen to lectures at the Sorbonne. Though not an artist in her own right, she was surrounded by painters and sculptors, and heard so much in the studios about Rodin that the genius

and personality of the grand old man took shape in her mind. She set to work to read and collect everything she could find and hear about him.

There were artists like old Alfred Boucher, who had known Rodin from the time he was a struggling workman and who talked of him not as a celebrity but as a lovable and often very troublesome friend. After listening to them Anne Leslie felt moved to describe Rodin as the mighty peasant rising out of the clay and turning to refashion it into inspired forms.

Amongst the truest words written about Rodin are those of Henri Gaudier, who said: "The greatness of Phidias and Michelangelo lies in the fact that they did not represent Egyptians and Gauls but their contemporaries. Rodin will be as big a man for the twentieth century as Michelangelo is for the sixteenth, but you must not compare one with the other."

Rodin, like all great artists, was of his time, but his work remains ageless. Born in an era of photographic art, he battled against the conventions that bound many others, but it took him forty years to break through. Curiously enough, Michelangelo was accused of exactly the same thing for

which Rodin was criticised: that he did not really copy the human body but exaggerated it.

Then as now, hundreds of mediocre artists had learned to reproduce various stationary forms in clay, but it took genius to capture movement, and the spirit that lay behind it. He did not reproduce, but created. There may be only half an inch between what is good and what is Art, but it makes the difference of immortality.

When Rodin's talent was finally recognized, the pendulum swung to the other extreme. Every art student in Paris modeled distorted and writhing figures with huge feet and impossible limbs. It is easy to copy anything—anything except genius!

New artists like Bourdelle appeared, following the paths hewn by Rodin's indomitable will. The movement which Rodin began found its counter-climax in the world of Epstein.

Miss Leslie was fortunate in collecting much original material from those who had known Rodin when he was in England. Among these were the late John Tweed and Lord Howard de Walden. A part of her volume is rich in anecdotes collected from these friends. The rest is comprised of in-

teresting and revealing selections from private and printed sources, together with due appreciation.

It is surprising that one as young as Anne Leslie should have covered so much of the surface of life and yet attained a certain profundity of mind. But this is an age in which youth prevails, and no better example of its power could well be found than in the pages of this work. Rodin himself would have asked for no greater tribute to his memory than that his biography should be written by a girl.

SIR JOHN LAVERY

London  
March 1937

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*The Publishers wish to express their gratitude to the METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART of the City of New York and the RODIN MUSEUM (Pennsylvania Museum of Art) of Philadelphia for their courtesy in granting permission to reproduce photographs of Rodin's works which appear in the text.*



## CHAPTER I

# *Red-Headed Son*

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Viens-tu du ciel profond ou sors-tu  
de l'abîme ô Beauté?

BAUDELAIRE

AUGUSTE RODIN opened his grey-blue eyes in a strange world. His father, a rugged Norman peasant, had left his province when a youth to find work in Paris. Jean-Baptiste was typical of his race, heavily built, big-handed, his profile cut as if from granite. At one time he had thought of turning monk, but soon after coming to the city he married a woman who soon died, leaving him one daughter named Clotilde.

Several years later he remarried. His second choice, a peasant girl from Lorraine, had inherited all the industry, self-control, and will-power of her mixed silent people. With his new wife Jean-

Baptiste settled permanently in the capital of Louis-Philippe. They found rooms in an ordinary workman's lodging at 3 rue de l'Arbalète in one of the oldest and poorest quarters. Their first child was a girl called Maria. Two years later, at midday on November 12, 1840, a small, red-headed son was born. Jean-Baptiste proudly registered the event in the town hall, and two neighbors, an architect and a barber, were witnesses. In the following January the baby was christened at the church of St. Medard. The god-parents were Auguste Levis, a shop assistant, and Françoise Adam, a housemaid, so the child was named Françoise-Auguste-René.

Maria and her little brother grew up together beside the swift, grey Seine, well-fed and content, as Papa Rodin earned enough to keep his family in rough comfort. On Sundays the children were dressed up and taken to one of the many old churches where they fidgeted and gazed wonderingly around. As South Sea Islanders teach their progeny to swim before they can walk, so worthy Christians deem it fitting that theirs should learn to lisp in prayer. But during the week Maria and Auguste were grubby and happy enough playing

in the twisting ancient streets of the Latin Quarter, mysterious, evil-smelling streets which even then were disappearing.

Auguste watched the dawn silver the fantastic, slanting roof tops of Villon's city, and saw stars creep around chimneys that were as grotesquely shaped as ogres. As soon as he could walk he accompanied his mother to the market where women shouted repartees and bargained wittily. Sabots clattered on the cobbles. He saw tiny shops light up their many-paned windows at dusk, and in dark alleys there were shadows that might have been witches lurking. The first talk he heard was the quick chatter of craftsmen and laborers, men who loved their work and found pleasure in the small things of life.

Music he learnt from street organ and organ-grinder.

The gargoyles of Notre Dame grimaced lustily at a small upturned face. Grimy hands were clasped in prayer while his glance stole over the Gothic loveliness of St. Severin. At midday he was to be found in St. Etienne du Mont. The Angelus sang forth, and the sunlight streaming through bejeweled windows threw patches of bril-

liant color on the women's bowed heads. It was the last of medieval Paris.

Since the revolution of 1830 the city had been growing rich, and material comfort took a new significance. Louis-Philippe brought fortune to the bourgeoisie, and the capital became cleaner and more modern. Wide streets were hewn through the mazes of old Paris, and better houses built. The picturesque was replaced by a hygienic beauty for which the shivering Romans in their island fort might well have sighed.

The Madeleine grew gently in the midst of the people. It became a church, but those classic pillars never could harbor the people's prayers with quite the understanding of Notre Dame, to whom their souls turned for refuge, whose eyes are dim with the sorrows of Paris, and whose ears are awake to her song.

By the banks of the Seine fountains were built. The snow-white Place de la Concorde spread like a stone-wrought flower over the death-place of Louis and Marie Antoinette. New bridges strode with thick triumphant legs through the brown waters of the river. The wide boulevards

were studded with cafés, and a strange night life began. A new gas lighting system transformed the dusky streets, and the powder of a thousand lights was scattered diamond-like over the city. La Ville Lumière was born, and over it, like a grotesque guardian angel, hovered the stout bourgeois king. A fever of luxury and pleasure fell on the capital; even the literary lights of the time were obsessed by a wild desire to put on swank. Black magic and unholy rites were the affectations of would-be genius.

In the rue de l'Arbalète life continued steadily. The honest workmen of the quarter were not interested in the dissipation or intellectualism of others. They were amused when Louis-Napoleon Bonaparte tried to land at Boulogne, only to be rescued from a swamping boat and imprisoned in the Conciergerie, but the Rodins never heard of Baudelaire or of Gerard de Nerval, who walked his pet lobster on a blue ribbon in the public parks.

Jean-Baptiste and his wife lived in close unity and peace. Their children were brought up to love one another and to believe passionately in the God of their ancestors. Each year bound them in



deeper companionship. Jean-Baptiste was slow-witted, but he had the traditional courtesy of olden times, which he passed on to his son.

Madame Rodin was unusually religious; her peasant blood held something of the mystic. Her daughter was educated in a convent, and as soon as Auguste was old enough, he was sent to an elementary school near his home. In the quarter called Val-de-Grâce he was taught by solemn-faced monks, but lessons did not appeal to his imagination. At nine years of age he knew scarcely anything. His attention seemed to be focused entirely on more interesting subjects. Mme Rodin found him lying in odd corners with old newspapers which had been wrapped around her market purchases. With much sighing and infinite labor he was copying the pictures he found therein.

Gradually changes took place in Paris. The prodigious artistic population had been steadily enraged by the complacent, money-grubbing bourgeoisie. When Louis-Napoleon landed a second time from England the former was ready to welcome a change.

Revolution came swiftly. Wide-eyed Auguste

heard the guns booming and knew that men were shooting in the streets and being killed on the barricades. On February 22, 1848, Louis-Philippe awoke King of France. By evening he had abdicated in favor of his grandson. Next day he wrapped himself in a shawl and fled, winning only the title of File-Vite. By February 24 the Second Republic had been declared. Baudelaire rushed madly through the streets, waving a gun and shouting. Through the deserted palace, like a mastiff infected with the curiosity of a marmoset, prowled the vast figure of Balzac. Royal stairway and gilded corridor he examined, led on by the same intriguing love of detail with which he explored life. Silence was broken by somebody playing the *Marseillaise* on the Queen's piano.

In June, after there had been a hush for several months, four days of civil war broke out. In December Louis-Napoleon was President of France.

All these things happened during Auguste's eighth year. He listened wonderingly to the talk of his elders, thrilled by tales of excitement and bloodshed and awed by their prophecies. Lessons became more boring and hateful than ever. What was a world of dead kings when live ones

were to be fought? What were the ghastly, feebly-colored countries of the atlas compared with lands of awaiting adventure?

Life held more interesting lessons than schooled wisdom, and the patterns of Nature more wonder than man's law. In trees and beautiful buildings he could find pleasure, for they had reason and design. But his elders held different views; they had theories about the importance of mathematics and obedience. The marvels of the world melted into the little routines of their existence. The maddening convention of education was imposed upon Auguste with small success. He was absorbed by his own discoveries, and the desolating rules of *a* and *b* and cubic fractions had to be drummed into his square unwilling head. At one thing he was adept, and that solitary accomplishment won him naught but punishment: With prodigious care he invented new ways of playing truant. The worthy monks may not have regretted his absence, but they notified his father and mother, who waxed furious and then anxious. All the world knows worry is the prerogative of parents. They cannot learn to view their offspring with philosophy. Besides escaping

school, their son was dirty and untidy. In vain his mother scolded and besought him, for she of Lorraine was extremely hard-working, neat, and clean.

Scatter-brained and tousled, Auguste grew by the banks of lovely Seine. The chestnuts of Paris were his first friends, their clean-cut leaves his books. Sturdy and broad of shoulder, he grew as had his forebears, who tilled the soil of Normandy or slept in the deep woods of Lorraine, whose heritage was the noble soil, and whose souls were wrought in stone and arch and Gothic carving throughout the land.

Mme Rodin had a younger sister, Thérèse Cheffer, housekeeper to the artist Michael Drolling. His painting of her at work in his dining room now hangs in the Louvre. He also sketched one of her three buxom sons. Although she had omitted the formality of getting married, Thérèse had a large heart. Her natural children, Auguste, Emile, and Henri all took their mother's name.

Having so deviated from conventionality, Thérèse Cheffer devoted the rest of her days to bringing up her family single-handed. She

worked like a slave to give them food and education. The three brothers were instilled with the moral and religious principles Mme Rodin gave to her family. They all had disconcerting artistic inclinations.

Auguste Cheffer, the eldest, was born five years before his cousin Auguste Rodin. The two boys were fourteen and nine when a change came into their lives.

Old Jean-Baptiste Rodin had a brother Alexander, who ran a school at Beauvais with considerable success. Thérèse Cheffer and Marie Rodin were both determined that their sons should have the best possible education, and to this end they saved and sacrificed continually. Jean-Baptiste was induced to approach his brother on the subject of terms. The school was expensive, and the pupils belonged to a superior class. The family resources had to be drained, but it was finally arranged that both boys should go as boarders. They went together. In the excitement of leaving, little Rodin hardly noticed his parents, sadly but proudly thinking of the learning their son would acquire. Nor was he impressed by Maria's efforts to control her tears. She was eleven

and he only nine, but they had been inseparable companions. Later, during fits of violent homesickness, he remembered her face.

While his parents struggled to pay the fees, their darling had to adapt himself to four years of gloomy loneliness. Youth is always enchanted by the prospect of a complete change. It was disagreeably surprising for Auguste to discover that Beauvais meant only a desolation of white walls and ugly benches. The unhappiness of a child is impossible to express. Because of the difference in ages he did not see much of his cousin and his companions, who did not seem to resent a dull existence. They divided into little sets and laughed at him openly. But this mockery of richer boys who found their place in the world more easily was nothing compared to his hunger for solitude and beauty. During all that time he found only a rustling, vibrating comfort in the trees, and only the silent cathedral to lift his heart with wonder.

Indifference to the scorn of others is often an advantage. Being driven into himself, he became self-sufficient. Life is a perpetual battle, and Auguste, bred of the soil, knew this while still

young. His fathers had not felt discontent with the ungiving earth, nor the injustice of unending toil. In spite of his sensitiveness, he never went through the mewling-pewling period of adolescent genius. We are spared the morbid complexes of misunderstood youth, the dismal whines which have heralded so much that our civilization calls Art. He came of a race that could face failure proudly, and strive, even in the face of defeat. It seemed odd that the world should be unsympathetic, but Auguste decided to master difficulties as they came, and never to bow his head.

If the nights were long with the misery of a small, hopeless boy, no tears showed in the morning. If he ached with futility, his parents never knew. It was impossible to run away, so he waited until other interests made him oblivious to his surroundings.

In the beginning Art was gay. The cave dwellers drew on their walls, not for profit, but because they saw fierce beauty in mammoth form and the swift, angry animals around them.

Culture and repression have fostered strange

loveliness in our world. Wonders have been cast forth that are as the oyster's pearl, shining excrescences wrought of pain and disease. Genius remains natural and spontaneous. The dim flame in Auguste Rodin was that of the sweet, brutal earth, all-creating, all-grasping. He was born with an instinctive sense of the rhythm of movement, and recognized beauty in the beating sea, the flowering earth, in the muscled limbs of man, and in that striving desire of man's, as well, for these things meant power and life.

Being a child, Auguste found difficulty in expressing his intense feelings. He believed in his own capabilities, but he was unbalanced, and he caught at suggestions around him that were straws in the whirlpool of decision. By turn he thought of being monk and author. Believing he saw all that slipped the perception of others, he did not think it possible to fail.

One gleeful day the boys discovered him alone in a class room. From the professor's chair he was discoursing heroically to empty benches. Auguste's dignity was hurt by the jeers that followed. Still, he visualized himself as an orator,



swaying millions and stamping his strange, undefinable thoughts on others. What he was going to tell the world did not matter.

Uncle Alexander grew desperate over his stupid nephew. In class the boy was dreamy and slow, and made the most of a convenient near-sightedness which prevented him from grasping what was written on the blackboard. Yet in a quiet way he learnt more than the teachers guessed. Only mathematics remained irremediably beyond his intelligence.

Auguste Cheffer had more success, and ended by marrying Anna Rodin, the daughter of his master.

Young Rodin drew well, but without any particular talent. His efforts with the pencil did not reflect the undisciplined impulses of his imagination, and architecture attracted him more. Subconsciously he understood proportion, and beautiful buildings drew him with a force he could not control or comprehend. Of one thing he was sure. Whatever he undertook, he would do better than anyone else.

Before Auguste had decided what career to adopt, his parents wrote they could no longer afford

to pay the fees. He must return to Paris. This particular phase of his education was at an end; and since he could still neither spell nor add, perhaps it was just as well.

With an empty mind, and neither sad nor joyful, he departed from Beauvais. His brain had picked up a smattering of things, but in his heart he bore from that place one image: the wistful Gothic cathedral which had inspired him in the years of boredom.

The whole family was waiting to welcome him. There stood his adoring mother and his good-tempered, amusing father; Maria danced with excitement.

School days were over, and Auguste wished he had tried to enjoy them a little more. Knowing his parents had slaved to educate him, he wished that they might have been made a little prouder—that he had not proved so stupid and had brought home a few more prizes. He had one satisfaction. They had never seen what he endured, nor could they have gauged the torment boys inflict on one who is not quite as they.

A delightful life now commenced. Every Sun-

day there were family parties with the Cheffer cousins and excursions to the Jardin des Plantes, or, in good weather, to the hills of Clamart. Jean-Baptiste, always in the best of form on these occasions, teased his wife for her seriousness, while the others laughed. Maria, light-hearted and gay, played with her father as if he were a great bear. Auguste trailed along beside his mother. He was vague and absent-minded, so the others considered him bad company.

They celebrated the New Year as usual. The Cheffer boys arrived, laden with oranges, and Mme Rodin presented each little urchin with thirty sous.

First communions were marked with great festivity. The cousins presented each other with white-bound prayer books, and for many years Henri Cheffer treasured the rosary which Maria gave him on that solemn occasion.

The only name never mentioned in the family circle was that of Jean-Baptiste's other daughter, Clotilde, who had grown up with remarkable beauty and doubtful virtue. The life she led was unwisely gay, and, although they forgave the failings of Aunt Thérèse, the Rodins were shocked by this lovely wanton. Madame Rodin's mouth





could grow very hard, and she had no tolerance for her stepdaughter, who now came home less and less often.

## *An Odd Apprenticeship*

---

Justice is my being allowed to do whatever I like. Injustice is whatever prevents my doing so.

SAMUEL BUTLER

“WELL, SON,” insisted old Rodin, “when are you going to choose a profession? We’ve given you a good start, but we can’t support you forever. Your mother and I’ll get old some day, and then we’ll need you to look after us.”

His manner was gruff, but the pride and affection in his eyes betrayed a tenderness for his only son that the young rascal noted and traded on.

“What do you feel fit for? They didn’t find you good for much at Beauvais, but we’ll do our best to get you started. . . .” He laughed and clapped the boy on the back.

Madame Rodin looked up from her knitting

with a smile of approval. The evening light softened her face, for, though only forty-eight, she had wrinkled early like a crab apple, as peasant women do. Auguste knew exactly what his father was saying. He hardly needed to listen, so long had he guessed those words would come. He watched his mother's smile, and noticed the hundred lines of character around her eyes and the corners of her mouth. She was sure that her son would prove worthy of all that had been done for him, sure that he knew how to work and succeed. According to her belief, work was the breath of France, and success the breath of life. She would help him, and that unspoken assurance set a seal upon his heart.

Auguste resolved to reveal himself frankly. Maria came and stood in slippers by the kitchen door while he deliberated an answer. A gay, fresh girl of sixteen, she already earned her living by selling religious pictures and medals.

The Rodin family were slow to think and slow to decide. They gave Auguste plenty of time. He knew that they expected him to choose some useful profession, and would be only too ready to apprentice him, so he opened cautiously: "Well,



Papa, I am sure you won't care for the idea but I know I could be a good artist. I can't prove it now, of course, but later on I will."

There was a moment's silence while his father leaned back and frowned. Then he laughed crossly: "Don't be a fool."

Auguste went on lamely, feeling he was disappointing them all. "Well, drawing is the only thing at which I'm any good at all, and I do know that I'll get much better. I just know it . . . that's all."

"Fiddlesticks! I never heard such nonsense. Good God! Get those highflying ideas out of your head. Just because you've been expensively educated doesn't mean you can follow any whim that enters your head."

There was a light clicking of steel knitting needles, and a deep sigh. By a fraction of a second the rhythm of the needles outpaced the ticking clock, as if human industry must race time itself. Jean-Baptiste came to the conclusion that fourteen was too young for a boy to choose for himself. In his mind's eye he saw his son loafing around cafés, unwashed, oddly dressed, and intensely conceited, drinking himself to death in the cause of inspira-

tion if he sold a picture, starving if he did not. His feelings were expressed in one terrific shrug which began with his arms lifted in the air and shoulders hunched above his ears, and ended with his hands hanging limply beside him, palms outward, and fingers stretched like stars of amazement.

"Well, maybe it's because you don't know what you're talking about." There was irritation in the words. "But why can't you find an honest profession instead of wanting to join those lazy idlers and good-for-nothings? I don't know what's happening to your generation. The boys will do anything but work, and the devil a lot of good they'll come to. What in heaven's name my father would have said to such nonsense. . . ."

For several minutes he seemed overwhelmed by the thought of his own tolerance compared with that of his father. Madame Rodin looked worried, feeling that she must have spoilt her son more than was good for him. Maria was also silent, but understanding glimmered in her eye. She knew what went on in that uncombed, red head. Guessing that he was not happy, she had written to him often at Beauvais, giving him home news and news of the city. Through her letters he had visualized

Napoleon III's ride through the Arc de Triomphe, and lovely Spanish Eugenie driving, as had so many long-dead queens, to her marriage at Notre Dame amid the shouts of the populace. These things had she written him, together with descriptions of Sunday's supper.

Glad that Auguste stuck determinedly to his point, she took up his side. After much argument it was decided to send him to a free drawing school nearby, a small, efficient institution in the Rue de L'Ecole de Medicine. Jean-Baptiste still growled disapprovingly about a weakling son and modern degeneration. Then, as his grumblings were ignored by wife and daughter, he began to take a secret interest. He admired the boy's obstinate desire for this one thing, and thought there might be something in his fantastic ideas. He ruminated and watched. "If the boy is a born artist, let him make practical use of his talent," he was heard to mutter.

La Petite Ecole de Dessin, founded in 1765 by Bachelier, a favorite artist of Madame de Pompadour, was intended to develop draftsmen rather than artists. The pupils, mostly poor boys who showed a little talent, had hopes of joining some

artistic industry. Auguste worked in the lovely 18th century house every morning from eight till midday, and learnt the elements of drawing and modeling. Happily, the school was free from official pressure. Madame de Pompadour had gone, but her school remained a hundred years behind the times, following 18th century traditions, teaching grace of design rather than the iron-bound principles of the day. The work consisted chiefly of copying red chalk drawings and bas reliefs in the styles of Louis XV and Louis XVI.

There was one master at least who knew his job: Lecoq de Boisbaudran was a character. He cared not for fashion, nor for the scoffing of others. He had a curious flair for perceiving talent, and trained his pupils by making them study subjects and reproduce them from memory, maintaining that it was more important for an artist to develop his perception than have a memory loaded with rules. Up and down between the desks strode the tall figure of Lecoq, correcting and helping or silently watching. His glance often rested upon a bowed red head, and he began to understand the Norman boy's temperament. Young Rodin worked hard

under this master. His eye grew quick and his judgment sure. And in these morning classes Auguste made two lasting friends, youths named Dalou and Legros, both of whom would some day rise to fame.

The afternoons he passed in the Imperial Library, or in the Library of St. Genevieve, guardian of Paris, and they were over quickly. Sometimes he was refused admission, but when he could persuade the librarian to ignore his poor appearance and his nervous manner, all was well. He studied and copied the engravings of Michelangelo and Raphael, and soon he knew all the old Italian masters. In the Louvre he found himself at home, and many hours flew by in the galleries. He lived in the noble company of Titian, to whom beauty was wise, velvet-clad, and bejeweled; of Rembrandt, master of the brush, who understood light as no other man; of the cool, clear, eminently sane Raphael; and of Rubens, who turbulently mirrored the life of the flesh. He grew to know these men and to understand them. He had no other companions.

Naturally, he desired to be a painter, but canvas and paint tubes were too expensive. To copy the

antiques only paper and crayons were needed, so he was forced to work in the rooms of statuary. Gradually he developed a passion for sculpture, and he longed no more to experiment in colors. One day he stole to the modeling room in his school. He watched the pupils working and an enchantment fell upon him. His fingers reached for the clay. . . .

A huge undiscovered world was opened to him, the world of the past, so rich in marvels—Assyrian splendor and Egyptian wisdom, the white perfection of Greece, and Gothic mystery. The boy could not turn back; having tasted the bitter fruit of beauty, he must always hunger, striving to reproduce that elusive fruit from the turmoil of his mind.

Most youths of fifteen have a secret romantic ideal, in which they believe implicitly and which they mold to their own perfection in imagination; Rodin was no exception. He dreamed of the *Venus de Milo*. He had noticed the slight difference in the rhythm of her lines as boys notice bonnets on the girls they admire. Most classical statues are balanced and straight, with hollowed backs. She of Milo leans slightly forward like the

later Christian saints and madonnas when they bless. The Greek Venus was hardly a goddess of blessing. "But there is neither unrest nor torment in her inspiration. She is the joy of life, harmonized and controlled by reason," Auguste informed his astonished family at the supper table.

The classic masterpieces had a deep effect on his mind. He was in the habit of living in forgotten worlds, and now his imagination seldom left the shores of Greece. He walked with muscled athletes, hyacinthine-haired and violet-crowned. He saw maidens running in floating tunics to offer sacrifices to love and wisdom, and he dwelled in temples built around forms of pure marble, limbs that seemed warm and transparent as human flesh. Philosophers walked white-robed through the towns, speaking of the mysteries of beauty. On wild mountain tops the gods left their quarrels and their passions to visit the altars of men.

On the steps before *The Victory of Samothrace* stood a disheveled boy. The museum guardians stalked by, their expressions hang-dog with boredom, but he saw a river of gold-lit waters leading through a land of olive trees and myrtle to the distant Mediterranean. He saw the white islands

and the sea, and beheld the wind beating the breasts of his Victory.

Small wonder Auguste had not won prizes at school for practical observation! In a haze he wandered through the galleries, until closing time drove him home through the buffeting streets. He was bumped back into his own world by the family's caustic remarks on his appearance, which was neither Greek nor god-like.

The neighbors thought it an odd apprenticeship to choose for an only son.

The full years slipped by. Each hour was crammed. From early morning till late at night Auguste never rested. On the foundations of study laid at this time he would build later. Every day at dawn he went to the studio of an old painter, Lozé, who was a family friend, where he worked on various canvases.

From eight until twelve he was at La Petite Ecole, while his fingers grew to understand the clay. That which had given life to his forebears he, in his turn, molded into life.

Midday rang, and he was off to the Louvre or a public library, munching bread and chocolate as



he went. Then he walked across half of Paris to a drawing class at the Gobelins Manufactory, and worked at the nude from five until eight.

At home in the evenings, after the frugal family meal, he sat apart, redrawing sketches. Late into the night he worked, and sometimes his mother could not prevent him from drawing while he ate, and his masters were much impressed by such ardent perseverance.

Urged on by poverty as much as by desire, he wore himself to the bone. When the goal lies at the end of a long road, it is hard not to be impetuous, but he overtaxed his strength. The strain caused sudden, internal pains, and in spite of a powerful constitution it was not long before he was near collapse. No boy can stand an eighteen-hour day for long.

A portrait by his friend Barnouvin shows him at seventeen, thinning in spite of his wide frame. At this time the Rodins were living on the third floor of an old house in the rue des Fosses St. Jacques. Barnouvin often came to visit them. He also painted Maria, who had the same wide forehead and curious, grey eyes as her brother.

Barnouvin did not notice her nervousness while posing.

With irritation Jean-Baptiste watched his son grow haggard and gaunt. "What on earth do you think this fury of work is leading to?" he asked. The answer was always the same: "I want to be a sculptor." His father grumbled at such waste of energy, and Mme Rodin's sense of order was outraged by the casts her son brought home. When he asked for a corner for his first works, she scolded heartily.

"When will you stop cluttering us with your plaster casts? You get in my way! The wretched things are everywhere, even under the bed!"

It was one thing to support her son's artistic ambitions, but quite another to have her neat apartment used as a dumping shed.

But Maria was always his real friend. She believed in his genius, and she liked his acquaintances—especially Barnouvin. Auguste confided in her, and she sympathized with his worries. She had always been diligent and successful at her studies, and she was taken on as a teacher by some society for spreading the seeds of wisdom. Brother and

sister solemnly went to be photographed together.

Auguste did a classic bust of his father. Jean-Baptiste had a grand face to model, big-boned and strong as a lion's mask. But he was upset when he saw the result.

"Why on earth don't you put my whiskers in?" he exclaimed, for they were his secret pride. Auguste, however, had been admiring the long lines of Roman Emperors in the Louvre, and he refused to change the bust.

His parents asked a lady of their acquaintance who knew Maindron, a well-known sculptor, if he could be induced to give an opinion. Maria had encouraged hope, but they wanted professional assurance. The verdict was favorable, as verdicts generally are when parents ask. Auguste trembled with excitement, and eagerly went up for the entrance examinations of the Ecole des Beaux Arts.

He failed, but the disappointment spurred him on. Next year he tried again, and was once more refused. Not realizing that he was without influence, and that the delicate 18th century style which had been honored at the drawing school was considered out of date by academicians, he steeled

himself a third time. It was of no avail. His parents were bitterly upset by the repeated failures.

Weary of heart, he turned his back on the Academy then and for all time. Nothing could daunt the courage of that lanky, under-nourished boy. Plunging into his work more feverishly than ever, he went twice a week to evening lectures by Barye, the animal sculptor, in the Jardin des Plantes. The man was not a conscientious teacher; real artists seldom are. He arrived tired and depressed. "All right, very good," was all he would mutter, scarcely glancing at what he was shown. One idea he strengthened in Rodin's mind—always to study Nature and turn to Nature for wisdom and for inspiration.

Auguste began to read the great poets. He followed history and literature classes at the Collège de France. Years of schooling had been of small avail, but in his own way he educated himself. He never learned to spell, but he did become extremely well read.

Maria grew quiet and secluded, but Auguste was too busy to notice the change until she announced startlingly that she had been in love with Barnou-

vin, and he was going to marry someone else. Shocked by her unhappiness, Auguste suddenly realized that Maria had grown up. For the first time, he noticed the austere beauty in her face as she spoke: "He is the only man I could ever love. I have decided to become a nun." Auguste looked at her first in amazement, and then in anguish. Being deeply religious, he could not grudge his sister to God, but he knew how empty life would seem without her. Jean-Baptiste gave a wistful sigh when told, but old Madame Rodin rejoiced. Her daughter was "settled" for eternity!

The birds of the outside world were singing when Maria took her veil in the candle-lit chapel. Auguste knelt and prayed, with a wedge of loneliness in his heart.

He watched the still face he had known since childhood. Her lips were resigned to a peace he could not understand. She had left him to find happiness invulnerable. In the midst of swirling life she stood fulfilled and moveless. Her faith would not fail.

A few months later Auguste was walking along



RODIN MUSEUM

THE TWO HANDS





the quays when he noticed among the deal of trash a book which had caused an uproar several years before. He bought the volume, and throughout many nights that followed he read until dawn had veiled the stars over Paris. With a curious fever he devoured *Les Fleurs du Mal*, and the wicked beauty of these poems contrasted oddly with his love for medieval architecture and old church music. Sometimes his affinity with these two things had been a worry, for they dragged him from his chosen path, and he knew the importance of concentration. In time he learned to use outside stimulants, and he blended dimensions and music in his sculpture.

Throughout the summer nights, the exotic flowers of Baudelaire twisted through the fields of his brain, mingling strangely with serene Gothic lilies.



## *Hands and Feet*

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I will go unto the altar of God  
To God who rejoiceth my youth.

PSALM

TO EARN his bread Auguste must work. It was time for him to be self-supporting and to help the home with his salary. At the age of twenty he was maddened and humiliated by the fact that his talent had no commercial value. He procured a job as assistant to a designer. At first the situation galled, but he soon discovered the pleasure of craftsmanship, and it enabled him to go on learning. He determined to make the best of life, and the original little trees, flowers, and plants he molded delighted his employer.

Feeling that only in clay could power and happiness be found, he still attended evening classes, and

so had no time to brood or envy successful colleagues. Nor did he suffer from that heroic melancholia of youth which loudly proclaims itself to a tired world.

Quick to recognize talent in others, he found friends among the older artists, and snatched at any opportunity of learning. Too eager to be proud or jealous, he was always ready to listen to a man who knew his craft. The very atmosphere of a studio calmed his spirit.

Young Rodin received encouragement from various sculptors in whose studios he was given occasional work, and from an ordinary artisan he unexpectedly learned the secret of balance in a moving figure. This man, Constant Simon, worked in the studios with Auguste, and helped him with decorations. He was the first to teach Rodin a way of seeing things which made all the difference to the youth's sculpture. The science of modeling is the power of producing an impression of real life. "Carefully examine the Venus de Medici," Rude used to advise his pupils, "and under the polish of the skin you will see the whole muscular system appear."

There was a garden outside the studio window.

Rodin and his companions often modeled the living plants in their decorations.

One day Constant Simon was watching Auguste struggle with a capital of clay leaves. "Rodin," he said, "you've got the wrong idea. Your leaves are flat as plates. That's why they don't look real. Make some of them dart their points forward, so that you have the sensation of depth when looking at them."

Auguste was amazed at the results of following this simple advice. "Take care to remember what I'm telling you," Constant continued. "When you model in future, don't see just the side of the form which is spread out towards you, but its whole depth. Try not to see things at one angle only, but form a conception of the whole. That is the only way you will learn the true science of modeling."

For an ordinary workman, Constant had thought out his job well. Rodin listened to his careful explanations, and worked according to this principle with success. He applied it to figures. Instead of imagining the different parts of the body as even surfaces, he forced himself to think of them as the exterior of an ever-changing organization. In

every ripple of limbs and torso he felt the growing muscle and bone developing in darkness beneath the skin.

Instead of an exact and superficial resemblance, the strength of his figures spread from the very core of the body like the vibrations of life itself.

Two years passed. Rodin was over twenty and very lonely. In a shy, uncompanionable way he admired women, but he had no confidence. Who ever heard of a girl falling in love with red hair and pale eyes?

Maria, still a novice, had grown frail during her convent life. News came that she was suffering from peritonitis, and it was thought best she should return to her mother's care. One bleak December morning she came home, and a few days later she died.

Auguste's grief terrified those around. He was like a wild animal bereft. In the empty spaces of his devastated world no consolation could be found, for her madonna-like calm had been his haven.

Dust and ashes lay around his feet, and in his heart a pain that no human would evoke again. Fearing for his reason, the Rodins summoned an old friend, Father Aimard, to calm him. For a

long time he raved wildly and would not listen; then suddenly, like a hurt child, he turned to the priest for comfort.

Desperately trying to find that peace which Maria had known, Auguste gave up art and resolved to take the cassock. He attached himself to the Fathers of the Holy Sacrament in the Faubourg St. Jacques. That Christmas his family watched him serving mass in a surplice. Father Aimard cared for him wisely, and in several months had drawn him by the paths of reason to a mood of silent resignation. As superior, he could give the grief-stricken boy permission to draw and a place where he might model in the monastery garden. The old man hoped Rodin would devote his abilities to the church as many did in medieval days.

For nearly a year Rodin followed this guidance, and his misery ceased. But the monastic life was not for him. Experienced in human nature, Father Aimard soon realized that such an impulsive, childish temperament was unsuited to the Church. After waiting for the first elation to wear off, he urged a return to the world. Rodin thought of his parents, bereft of both children and extremely poor. He decided to take the old man's

advice. Like a sea bird driven inland by stormy weather, like a wounded bird, he had sought sanctuary. Now the sun felt warm again. His wings were strong, and he must fly away.

It was a lightsome, swiftly changing world. The Second Empire rolled to its close, a procession of chimney-pot hats and vast crinolines dancing gaily to twinkling music. Paris had been outraged by Wagner and Baudelaire, and Baudelaire was now in turn outraged by "*l'insupportable vie, l'implacable vie*" which Rodin would learn to love. It was spring in his heart when he returned to ordinary life, and it was spring in the city of Theresa and Patti and Offenbach, the blithesome city of *opéra bouffe*. Queen Victoria visited the Great Exhibition, and glamorous Nana paraded the Boulevards with her scarlet liveries and Russian trotters.

Only art stultified.

Rodin breathed the Seine air and once more felt wild, pagan, brave, and free. Gaily he resumed his old work. It was one of those fresh starts to be made so often. He managed to afford a small studio in a stable near the Gobelins, and Father Aimard helped arrange it. The old man grew

fond of this young spirit, and wished to see him settled and happy. Before their ways parted, Rodin dextrously modeled an excellent head of the priest.

In his own little studio he spent his leisure hours working at busts, in hopes they might be accepted by the Salon. There was a well in one corner of his cellar, and the place was icy, but large and well-lighted. He accumulated works until there was hardly room to turn around; but because he was too poor to have his studies cast, most of them were lost. The worst disappointment occurred when a large bacchante on which he had concentrated two years' effort was accidentally broken in moving. There being no other copy, the work had to be scrapped.

Original models were hard to find, for Rodin sought character in his types. He wanted to mold emotion and expression into the clay. Mere physical likeness was not enough. Constant Simon had taught him that all bodies were continually growing. He felt that all a man experienced and suffered should be depicted in his face. Auguste's technique was nearly perfect, but he had not yet acquired sufficient comprehension of life as a whole. He found an intriguing subject in an Italian shep-

herd named Bibi, who swept the studios and posed in the evenings. He was a strange fellow. The lines on his face might have been chiseled by the very goddess of pain, and his curious dignity was enhanced, rather than marred, by a broken nose.

Rodin worked enthusiastically, and the result was the best he had yet achieved. Not only was it a likeness, but all the ugliness and sorrow the man had known were revealed in plaster. It seemed the cold strength of the bust could not fail to win recognition.

*The Man with the Broken Nose*, as he called it, was refused by the Salon in 1864. Manet, Monet, Renoir, Legros, Jongkind, and Whistler had been refused the previous year, but to have known it would not have comforted a poor sculptor trying to force an opening.

Rodin did not lose confidence. "They are all wrong," he said doggedly, and he repeated that phrase many times during his life.

After this failure, Rodin was alert to seize passing opportunities. When introduced to a popular sculptor named Carrier-Belleuse, who was also a product of La Petite Ecole, he took his chance, explained his capabilities, and became an assistant in



the vast studio. This new position pleased him. "It changed me from a mere ornament maker to a molder of figures," he said. For six long years he worked under this man, developing and completing the sketches handed to him. This forced imitation of another's style came hard to one who was full of his own inspirations, and Rodin knew it did him no good; yet he managed to retain his individuality. His deftness being recognized in the studio, he was given plenty of work. But "I learn nothing," he complained in bitterness.

In one of the long rooms in the Louvre which Carrier-Belleuse had been commissioned to decorate, most of the reliefs were Rodin's own work; but such works as the *Hebe* of the Luxembourg gave him pitifully little chance for self-expression. He wrought her hands and feet!

## *Mademoiselle Rose*

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The flame of the soul burns upwards,  
but we must allow for atmospheric  
variation.

GEORGE MEREDITH

FROM CHAMPAGNE to Paris came a fresh-cheeked peasant girl. Rose Beuret, the daughter of a vine-tender, a comely wench, wide-eyed and strong-boned, sought work in the great city. Destiny made her innocent, anxious to please, and sweet as the grapes of her country. Destiny also gave her a job as seamstress under a certain Mme Paul who ran an establishment in the Gobelins Quarter.

To and from her work hurried the little mid-nette, never feeling lonely, for her days were hard and busy. She had beautiful brown eyes that flashed like gold, and a mane of thick hair, which

curled in a most original manner. Her enormous hats were always tilted at the choicest angle.

Such is the picture we have of Rose in the 'sixties. "I am from the country of Jeanne d'Arc," she would introduce herself proudly.

From the porchway of the *Théâtre des Gobelins* eager eyes observed her. The building was under repair at the time, and a hulking young man had been set to work on the caryatids. Morning and evening when she passed, he stirred, and the breath of spring came to his nostrils.

Maria had left a hidden desolation in his heart, sealed by the understanding of a priest, unshared by woman. Perhaps a new, sweet love might fill that emptiness.

He could bear suffering in silence, but not love. Rodin determined to meet the lady of his desire, and planted himself firmly in her path at the dress-maker's. That which he sought he found.

Hundreds of times a week in the streets of Paris some blue-shirted workman accosts a little shop girl with a gay remark. They laugh. For a time their lives may be linked as easily as their arms. Then they pass on. But Rose, lifting her eyes to the deep eyes of Normandy, knew her life was

fulfilled, knew that all her years must flicker in the shadow of that elusive presence. Body and soul, she was bound.

Some women love their men for power, others for helplessness; some are attracted by the set of the shoulders or the turn of a neck. As a rule the lure lies in the home provided by the witless male. Rose had the qualifications of a perfect workman's wife, yet this young sculptor did not marry her. In spite of his recent ecclesiastical escapade, Rodin had many pagan theories. Rose's flowering virginal adoration flattered and appeased him. Peace he found on her breast, but the strange instinct which led her to love without knowing or caring for the result he took for granted. His heart, finding a well of devotion, too easily turned elsewhere, and his dreams were more of bronze and clay than of tender woman.

Rose had known no other romance, and she yielded unquestioningly to her first and only man. Against her teaching and her belief she yielded, praying the saints to ask forgiveness for a love that was steadfast as steel.

In the soft, violet evenings, when work was done and the stars powdered the city, she walked with

her lover, who did not realize he had all that woman can give to man. The curious many-colored tapestry of love she wove in complete devotion and laid before his feet, never doubting that he would always tread softly.

Rodin lived with his parents and worked with great steadiness, as in the shelter of a harbor, in the rue Tombe Issoire. His mother did the cooking and mending, and went to market with a basket on her arm. He never mentioned the admiring and obedient Rose, who worked hard at her sewing, and posed for him at dawn and eventide when they had free hours together. Rodin's needs and passions were satisfied, but he still yearned for more time to devote to his own work.

Rose's eyes shone with secrets at his mere approach. Dear thing! Auguste smiled with male satisfaction. He knew too well that, being so much in love, she could not have anything to hide from him.

The months slipped by and then he got a shock. What seemed the most illogical consequence of love fell upon them. The anti-climax disconcerted and bewildered Rodin. Rose was going to have a child! The inconvenience of parenthood

was more than the student of Nature could tolerate, but his lady appeared incomprehensibly pleased, perhaps hoping that a proper marriage might result. Puzzled that all attention could be completely transferred from himself, Rodin put on a vague air and grew again shy and retiring. Being secretly ashamed, he pretended that the business had nothing to do with him. The bee is not responsible for every flower it impregnates! Thus he reasoned, but still thought it wiser not to mention the matter to his parents.

All this happened within a few years of Rodin's fervent intention to join the priesthood. Lucky indeed for the church was the hour when Father Aimard escorted that temperamental stripling out of the monastery gates.

One fine day in the Maternité, Rose produced a red, grimacing object which Rodin was forced to recognize as his own offspring. Radiant with happiness, she looked up from her little iron bed and said it already bore him a likeness. Peering into the infant's minute, discolored mask, he felt a twinge of curiosity, mingled with disgust. This was an incredible little parody of the human form, and it was his!

O trees, how lovely is your budding! Pale eggs and nests of spring and woodland cubs, with what charm you tumble into this fell world!

Blushing, he stumbled from the hospital ward.

Aunt Thérèse Cheffer had proved a worthy friend and confidante, so she was the first to whom he broke the news that he was a father.

Then, summoning courage, he invited Rose to meet the family at Sunday lunch. The cousins were all there, and watched her curiously. During a silence that followed the meal Auguste braced himself and stuttered the news. Rose lifted her great dark eyes and confronted the family frankly.

Having gasped their first astonishment, the old Rodins appeared to feel more sense of responsibility than their son. Although Auguste still refused to marry, they agreed to treat Rose as a daughter-in-law, and she and the child came to live with them.

The women of the house now found their glory. Important whispers and cooings lasted from morning till night. Everywhere was hustle, bustle, a small voice screeching, pettings, baby talk, and the sour smell of baby clothes.



RODIN MUSEUM

MAN WITH THE BROKEN NOSE





RODIN MUSEUM

MOTHER AND CHILD

Auguste was of no interest to anyone. Rose had forgotten him, and even his bald-headed father was observed clicking his tongue and dandling the precious bundle. A curious jealousy stole through Rodin. For those possessing talent he felt no envy, but there was no link between him and this small, intruding, shameless stranger.

Night after night, the baby's howls drove him frantic, yet the mischief was his own doing. Not daring to complain, he wandered out into the streets in search of peace and inspiration. Then Rose returned to his arms, and he knew that she loved him more even than the child. Sunday mornings she posed for him, and if it was fine they wandered out to the country that lay around an unspoiled Paris. Long, beautiful afternoons passed in the woods and on the hills, afternoons whose happiness they never could recapture.

In a pathetic attempt to please, Rose called her infant Auguste, but her lover refused to lend the rest of his name. Rodin. The name that his Norman ancestors had brought from the snow-clad north he would not pass on.

The little creature evoked more interest when he began to clamber and tug at his father's trou-

sers for attention. Indeed, once this most horrid papa was enchanted. The child looked him straight in the eye, and, seeming pleased at what he saw, gave a smile of bewitching flattery. Rodin was captivated for several weeks by this graciousness of his son.

"I'm glad it's a boy, Rose!" he said.

"As long as he hasn't got your beastly nature," responded that lady, unappeased.

"I don't care about his character as long as he is an artist, a worker like me. . . ."

With simple sincerity he began to model clay images of mother and child. To her joy, Rose was given one of these tributes, which she kept till the end of her life. In spite of his strident and often raised voice, little Auguste appeared an attractive cherub.

Rodin's work was a cruel curb on an ardent imagination. Perpetual forced imitation drove him nearly mad. Yet it seemed unavoidable. Once a friend from the drawing school who had returned to his native Alsace got an order to restore some of the old churches around Strasbourg, and asked Rodin to join him. Glad to escape the

shackles of monotonous work in the studios of others, he flew to fulfil the commission.

Rodin could not reproduce the Gothic carvings with the skill of his friend, but he loved the mediæval towns. For a time his difficult struggles were forgotten in a peace of fields and birds and ancient shrines. In the early mornings, in the pale hour of sunrise, Rodin went to the churches and cathedrals to learn their secret beauty. No one noticed him wandering through the empty market places, a brawny young peasant, devoured by incomprehensible cravings and impulses that dominated every other emotion and were stronger than his affection towards any human being. As strange as his understanding with the trees grew this link with the grey, misted past.

Such an existence could not last. Worn out by his own restlessness, a longing for Rose and for home drew him back to Paris. There he executed some modeling for Biez, who was restoring Notre Dame. It was a dull, mechanical job, but he did it humbly, as though patching the Virgin's cloak.

Again he departed to work at Marseilles under Fourquet, who was ornamenting the Palais des Beaux Arts. Rodin loved the velvet-shadowed

city, but this Fourquet was even worse than Carrier-Belleuse, more exacting in his demands and more intolerant if the modeling did not exactly conform with his own ideas. Rodin was forced to return to his old master. Wearily he turned away from the sunlit town, the deep-eyed women, and the blue, tideless sea.

## *War and Brussels*

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Happy is he who, . . . poised above life,  
Understands effortlessly the language of flowers  
And voiceless things.

BAUDELAIRE

THE RODINS were living in the village of Montmartre when the war of 1870 broke out. Their house in rue des Saules stood at the summit of a small, unspoilt wood. The steep streets were bordered by gardens and parks where rabbits scuttled at dusk.

Auguste's wages were the family's chief means of support. His mother kept house. Rose went marketing in her wrapper and exchanged gossip with the neighbors who knew her only as the "other Mme Rodin." She earned a few sous by sewing and by delivering loaves in the morning, and she was popular with her lover's parents.

Little Auguste played with his adoring grandfather whom he quaintly resembled, the ancient gnarled profile recast in a fresh childish skin. Jean-Baptiste could not find work, for his eyes were failing.

The days passed swiftly on the hill. It was divine old Montmartre where the greatest artists gathered in the cafés, and the little housewives flung their inimitable chatter across the narrow streets. In the evening there were dances and, although Rodin had no time for such, he liked the little grisettes of the quarter. When Rose was not about, he observed them with shrewd delight, noting their walk and the swing of their hips, as well as their sly, naughty glances.

Occasionally he disappeared for a few weeks. No one knew where he went, or when he would come back.

One afternoon he returned, repentant, after a mysterious absence of several days. He did not say where he had been, but seemed full of good promises for the future.

“Rose, you will make a nice little dinner for tonight . . . seven o’clock . . . seven exactly. I will take you out for a walk afterwards.”

The poor girl, delighted at the reappearance of her beloved, immediately set about preparing his favorite dishes. She sang as she cooked. It was good to have him home.

Seven o'clock arrived but no Rodin was to be seen. The hours passed, and the dinner which she had carefully and happily prepared was spoilt. Rose laid her head on the table, and wept tears of bitter disappointment.

For three long weeks she heard nothing of her strange sweetheart. Then he suddenly returned, and was astonished to hear that he had ordered dinner nearly a month before.

Yet once in his arms, she forgave everything.

Sedan marked the end of the Second Empire. Excited crowds swarmed through the streets, thinking at first that victory was theirs. Later, the true news of surrender leaked through, and the eagle molted dismally from history.

Rodin volunteered as a garde nationale. It was his only military venture, and the experience was not pleasing. In the quarter where he absent-mindedly paraded, they nicknamed him "the solemn corporal in wooden shoes." He was not an impressive figure.



. On the fortifications between Montrouge and Issy another of the nation's odder guards was parading in the white August sunlight. Green-eyed Verlaine amused his fellow-soldiers with alternate bouts of hysteria and drunkenness.

Meanwhile the Prussians surrounded Paris with a ring of iron.

War trailed on, and the winter proved desperately hard. The besieged capital began to starve. In the bitter cold, soldiering ceased to be a joke. Rodin stuffed his clogs with straw, and grew gloomier than ever. Horses, cats, and dogs were eaten, and "rat ragout" was considered a delicacy. Candles were munched, and bread was made from bits of potato and straw instead of flour.

The kind English sent over a wobbly balloon which managed to steer its way over the famished city and drop packets of food. Rodin saw his friends grow gaunt and quarrelsome, and for the first time he realized what war and starvation meant.

In the early spring Bismarck made peace with the Third Republic. But France never forgave those months of invasion.

Carrier-Belleuse, having been conveniently sum-

moned to Brussels at the outbreak of war, was now engaged in decorating the Bourse and the Palais des Académies, and needed help in his studios. On hearing that Rodin was released from military service and penniless, he offered employment. The young man was glad of a fresh start. Full of hope, he obtained a passport and departed from Paris, which was falling into chaos under the Commune.

With great ambition and incredible vagueness he set off for Belgium. Aunt Thérèse Cheffer accompanied him. His parents, weakened by privations during the siege, remained in Paris, existing on Jean-Baptiste's pension of 900 francs.

Rose struggled to support herself and her child by stitching shirts for the soldiers in Paris. She managed to earn 25 sous a day, and on that they both had to subsist. For months she worried along without news, for Rodin was never a letter-writer, and time did not exist for him. In a city of barricades, flame, and smoke she stood the test. In spite of hardship and neglect she was faithful to her man. Would that Shakespere had known one such woman: frailty was not her name!

Auguste's journey with his aunt was a queer one,

He was dressed in ordinary clothes, except for his military cap. They covered half the distance in a tradesman's cart, and half on foot. Emile Cheffer had been taken prisoner at Sedan, and his mother hoped to see him.

The soldiers were suffering from lack of food. It was difficult to obtain anything except dry bread throughout the ravaged countryside. One day they found a half-abandoned pub. Rodin, delighted, started to laugh and joke in his gayest fashion. Bordeaux was fetched from the cellar, and the ever-thoughtful Aunt Thérèse produced some radishes from her bag.

Carrier-Belleuse was pleased to see Rodin. Knowing his worth as a workman, he persuaded the young man to lay down a host of dreams for a material project.

Rodin lodged in a coffee house near the Bourse. All day he had to toil under the direction of his old master, but at night he worked for himself. He wrote in great unhappiness to Rose.

3 June 1871

My dearest angel,

Death is in my soul while I write to you. My poor Rose, where are you? Write to me immediately. I am

also writing to my parents. What has happened to them?

Write to me at once how you are. As for me, I had hopes, my affairs seemed to be going well. But I am indifferent to everything.

Write quickly. I will be able to send you a little money.

If only I could hold you against my heart, Rose!

Tout à toi.

A. Rodin.

rue du Pont Neuf 36.

The letter took months to reach her.

He heard at last that the second siege of Paris was over, and none of the family killed. Rose, however, still worked from dawn till nightfall, after which, to get a bit of filthy bread and a few ounces of meat, she had to stand in a queue with her little boy sitting on her shoulders. His thin limbs seemed as heavy as lead.

To get a little money, Rodin sold one of his own statuettes to Carrier-Belleuse's agent. His master heard of it, and furiously gave him notice.

The Commune ended, and Carrier-Belleuse, sure of the re-establishment of order, threw up his Belgian contract, and returned to share in the general revival. Rodin was stranded. During the dark days that followed, he had not the heart to let Rose

know of his predicament. The years had gone too swiftly. He had reached the age of thirty without making a name or being able to support his old blind father. Could Jean-Baptiste have been right on that far-off day when he had begged his son not to be an artist? For the first time Rodin doubted himself, but he tried to pull his courage together. Curious fate had not forgotten him.

The things for which we strive Fate sometimes gives with a twist of her little finger.

In July, Auguste dared keep the bad news from Rose no longer, and wrote the following letter:

My little angel,

I am happy that you are safe and well; only I am greedy for more news. You do not answer all my questions. Give me details, so that I may know what you do these sad days. I can console you by saying that I will be able to send you some money soon. I think that my plans are going to work. Hope, my angel! If I have to stay in Brussels, you must join me. I long for you. You say nothing about M. Garnier and M. Bernard, to whom I will send some money. Go to them soon, and pay a visit to the studio. Is anything broken?

I wrote you a long letter in reply to one you sent me a month ago. I asked details about the house, the studio,

and everything else. Did it reach you? My little Rose, you can imagine the money worries I have had!

For three months I have been out of work. You understand how hard it has been. I had a quarrel with M. Carrier. All the same, things are going to start moving. Rose, you must still wait a little longer. I have not a sou for the moment. Luckily, a chemist and one of my friends have helped me, otherwise I don't know what I would have done. I asked you in my last letter to take my trousers to Mont-de-Piété; it used to be free. And M. Tyrode? Tell him that I will send the money as soon as I can. It is not possible for us to keep such big lodgings. All the same, in a month my position will be decided, whether I am to stay in Belgium or return. Go to M. Garnier, tell him to write to me and to bake his busts. Ask Bernard and M. Schavery the wine merchant to write me. Tell me a little about everything.

I love you, with all my heart.

Your friend,  
Auguste Rodin.

Rose could neither read nor write, so her more cultivated acquaintances had to decipher these letters.

The work which Carrier-Belleuse had cast away was given to his collaborator, a young Belgian called Van Rasbourg. Feeling incapable of finishing the whole harmonious decoration on his

own, this fellow asked Rodin to join him as a partner, free to follow out his own ideas, although he could not stamp them with his name. The offer came from the lap of heaven, and Auguste was in need of luck.

Van Rasbourg and Rodin planned together and got on excellently. In Ixelles, a village on the outskirts of the city, they formed a studio at 111 rue Sans Souci. Rodin flung himself with furious energy into the task he had awaited so long. In work lay happiness, and the heaviest toil felt light to his hands. He did nearly all the important carving for both the Bourse and the Palais des Académies.

In February 1873 they signed a contract. Their works were to be signed Van Rasbourg in Belgium and Rodin in France. A sculptor called Jules Pecher got a commission for a monument at Antwerp to the Burgomaster Loos which Rodin executed and Pecher signed.

The more labor he got through, the better; Rodin snatched at opportunities as a hungry man at food. This was the beginning for which he had been waiting many years. He hardly left the studio,

except to visit the market place. There he sat on some old barrel sketching the horses, for he liked to do all productions from real life.

Fortune did not arrive in a day. Rose still had to wait. She treasured letters that came from Brussels. People might laugh at Auguste's spelling and punctuation, but she understood his stilted phrases.

My dearest Rose,

I have your letter, it is a long one—Hurray! But I am not assured about the state of my studio. Give me more details of our private affairs. I am sending you 20 francs, be careful with them. 3 frs. are for Maman. My poor darling! I long to hug you! But I cannot let you come yet. I am still spending hardly anything, as the price of our works is not paid immediately. For a time I ate every day only 10 centimes worth of mussels, 10c. of fried potatoes. It was another siege. I had bought a ham in anticipation of hunger. But luck came, and now I will start eating and have money.

My poor Rose, I think of you a lot and curse myself for not being with you. Anyway, my little angel, all has an end, even sorrow. Trust in me.

Bernard ought to go to the studio. Poor Dumargue, I will send him some money soon.

In September 1871 he wrote again.



36 rue du Pont Neuf  
Bruxelles.

My dearest Rose,

Today I have been thinking about you. For several days you have been on my mind. Yes, if I had been alone I would have written you a long letter. I was in the country and happy. I rejoiced in the fine air and a lovely day. But my spirit was with you. It seemed that I heard you speaking, and you were contented. And all these thoughts about Rose resulted from a song you used to sing and which returned to my memory.

Soldats qui m'écoutez,  
Ne le dites pas à ma mère.  
Mais dites lui plutôt  
Que je suis à Breslau  
Pris par les Polonais.  
Qu'elle ne verra jamais.

You see I was suffering from an attack of sentimentality. All the same, I would not like to be entirely occupied with tender thoughts. When they come I welcome their visits, but it must not be too often. I dislike tyranny, even that of gentle emotion. But I must stop this nonsense.

Write to me at length; it will give me pleasure. When you dampen my figure do not make it too wet, or the legs will get soft. I am pleased that you are looking after my plasters and clay modelings. I will send a little money in a fortnight. My respects to Mme. Pouilleboeuf.

I am sending you 65 frs., of which give 30 to Fortune Zargrandi the big Italian who came to see you for me. He will come to take it. 30 frs. is for my parents, and 5 for you to complete your attire. I am sending them



RODIN MUSEUM

LA FRANCE



to you to save Maman running an errand. Kiss them for me. See that Papa is well looked after. Give me details. Go and see Bernard, ask him to write to me at the coffee house rue du Pont Neuf.

Your friend,  
A. Rodin.

P. S. I want Bernard to finish my marbles. I will send him some money.

So Rodin could afford to have his work reproduced in marble while Rose was trying to pawn his trousers at Mont-de-Piété!

On the first of October 1871 he wrote to her:

My dearest Rose,

I send you 100 frs. for M. Tyrode, and the rest for the removal of things from the studio. Leave the gladiator, which is too heavy. Leave also the little torso of Love, which is cut in the middle and a nuisance. It is this one (sketch). Leave the cast of Father Aimard out, take care of the cast of Bibi and this little virgin in clay (sketch).

My poor little thing, you have not written to me. I could not send you money before. I suppose you have not enough, but do understand. I have had such expenses, I could not do otherwise. But do not be afraid. I shall come in the middle of October. We are organizing a sale at Anvers. If it is a success, I will send you a present with which you shall buy clothes.

Write to me, my darling. Go to see papa, tell me how

he is. Have you a little work? Write me a long letter at once. I wanted to send you a 5 franc piece so that you could make a little dinner and invite Mme. and M. Pouilleboeuf. It must be for another time, but that is what I want you to do when I send it.

Au revoir, my dear, I am not very well.

Your affectionate friend,

A. Rodin.

P. S. In your next letter put your address clearly. Mine has been changed to Chaussée de Wavre 348. Be careful with the casts, my little one. Wrap each one up with newspapers, handkerchiefs, etc., especially the cast of *L'Alsacienne*.

*L'Alsacienne* was a bust of Rose executed during the hungry frozen months of the siege of Paris.

Now Rodin needed the care and comfort of Rose, for the nervous strain of the last months had worn him out. Overwork and insufficient food had hollowed his cheeks, and perpetual worry lurked in his eyes.

## *Prosperity and Travel*

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All which is beautiful, even humanly  
beautiful, dies, except in art.

LEONARDO DA VINCI

IN PARIS old Madame Rodin grew seriously ill. She and her sister Thérèse had suffered severely during the siege of Paris. Cold and starvation wrought effects on them both, but Marie had been previously weakened by smallpox, and towards the end of 1871 she died.

In toil and devotion she had spent herself. She did not regret going, nor had she any fear. To her husband she had been a good and faithful wife, to her children a loving mother. God had seen fit to take Maria to His own shelter, and to lead this other lass to her son's side. In spite of the bad boy refusing to marry, God had sent a little child. So reasoning, she died.

Rodin was still in Brussels at the time. Until he received the news, he did not realize how much she had meant. So it always is with the best things in life.

Often she had chided his impossible ways, for her industry was the hearthstone of the home. Love and respect she had taught him, and on her knee he had listened to the legends of Lorraine—from her he learned of the deep woods and their solemn quiet. Now she was dead, and he missed her sorely from afar.

Jean-Baptiste, nearly eighty and quite blind, was left alone in the tiny lodgings in the rue Tombe Issoire. Except for his pension of 900 francs a year, he had not a penny.

Thérèse Cheffer showed her usual kindness by taking the old man to live with her in the rue Dauphine. She had by now married a M. Dubois, and earned a precarious living doing laundry work.

At long last Rose got a letter summoning her to Brussels. With a sigh of relief she put away her needle, packed a few belongings, and promptly set off. It would be good to be at Rodin's side again and not have to stitch for her daily bread.

Little Auguste was dumped with his great aunt

Thérèse, who now appeared as generous with her few worldly goods as she had been with her affections in the past. When Thérèse's sons returned from the wars, they found a host of unfortunate strangers living on their mother's bounty. All the sketches which Rodin had given them were distributed as presents when she had no food to give this weird brood of paupers.

Hiring the largest room of a cottage, Rodin settled down with Rose at 15 rue du Bourgomestre at the end of the village of Ixelles.

Their friends were humble people like themselves, for Rodin was too naïve to think of advancing himself by pandering to the rich and influential. All his strength was directed to his art, and Rose asked nothing better than to look after his needs and to gossip with the neighbors. Once again he heard her singing,

Soldats qui m'écoutez,  
Ne le dites pas à ma mère.  
Mais dites lui plutôt  
Que je suis à Breslau

The life of peace suited them both. He earned steadily, but they continued to live in simple fash-



ion. Happiness, quiet, and prosperity were novel.

Public commissions increased Rodin's fame. Amateurs began to visit the studio and send orders. Business houses selling those pieces of sentimental banality termed "objets d'art" got in touch with him. Two small portraits of women called Suzon and Doria became a popular craze, and were sold by thousands. Local personalities turned up to have their busts done for the drawing room. Rodin enjoyed working on these. He modeled his doctor, M. Thiriar, as part payment for treatment received, and Jules Petit, a well-known singer. The long days of toil were interrupted only by pauses for lunch.

The stars ordained prosperity. With money saved, Rodin was able to travel. It was the only luxury he ever desired. He started by visiting the museums of Belgium, and for a time he concentrated, as before in the Louvre, on Rembrandt.

Rodin had his own method of traveling. Untroubled by luggage, and hardly knowing whither he was bound, he would disappear for weeks on end. Rose, having no clue as to his destination or whereabouts, had to await his return patiently, and deal as best she could with business proposals. His

shaggy, untidy figure was seen wandering through most of the cathedral towns of Europe, here today, gone tomorrow, tirelessly sketching and scribbling.

To Rouen and Chartres he went, to Rheims, Lyons, Vienna, Aix, Nîmes, Antwerp, Bruges, and Ghent. The names were like music.

Although he never learned to spell or punctuate, he read perseveringly and widely, and his pockets were always stuffed with books in which he dived during meals or while walking along the streets. People wondered at his neglected appearance and abstract manners.

Long rambles through the Belgian woods were another delight from which it were wiser not to predict his return. To the Forest of Soigne he would go at dawn, loaded down with sketching materials. The sun rose, turning the world to light, burning green. He lay on the moss, dreaming and learning. Losing all sense of time, he often never touched a brush. In the evening he might or he might not return.

In this haven of content, with books and beauty at hand, now that he could sculp, read, and travel as he willed, Rodin felt his past dreams harden and slowly merge into ideas he could grasp.

These ideas must materialize into solid forms. In spite of the fact that his life had not proved particularly successful, he had regained confidence. As surely as the forest trees mount to the sky, he knew he would finally express the things in his mind.

Four years of tranquillity had flown when the Paris Salon deigned to take one of his terra-cotta busts. It did not seem a great achievement for a man of 36, but he had learned much of late. Incessant work and practical experience are the best teachers. By watching the changing effects of his stone figures when they were laid in the open air he learned to cope with sun and rain. He searched for all the forgotten knowledge of old masters. In the quiet cottage evenings he learned from books, and in the woods he learned from Nature.

Temper and vagueness were conflicting qualities in Rodin. He invariably mislaid his sculptor's tools, and blamed Rose for taking them. Yet, even in anger, he retained the sculptor's detachment. In the middle of a heated quarrel he would suddenly stop, forget his argument, and calmly take

note of the play of muscles in the face of his angry opponent.

One evening when a calm, determined mood was on him, he stood watching Rose cover up his work. It was her special job to wrap wet cloths around the unfinished clay. He taught her the exact moisture needed, and she did better than anyone else. She was his studio handy man.

Tonight, moving quietly around the studio, she pleased him. There was a look of gentleness about her, and the movements of her hands were definite, they knew their work so well. She has some inner stillness, thought Rodin affectionately. Ah, les femmes! What man knows how they think, or what lurks behind their lying eyes?

Poor Rose had a smile on her lips and stillness in her heart, because these were her happiest days.

Rodin's attention drifted to work, and his nerves tightened. He was dead sure of himself. There was no need to force the masterpieces within him. Such things must grow slowly. They would mature, for he could feel them already—strange, wonderful things from another world, pressing against his consciousness, demanding existence.

It was the year 1875 when, like a modern girl anxious to put the finishing touches to a perfect education, Rodin set off to Italy for the first time. Having only a few weeks to spare, his idea was to study Michelangelo and Donatello. His method of travel, however, was not that of a gentle debutante, for to him, appearance, board, and bed were of little importance.

He crossed the Apennines on foot, and Rose received a merry letter.

I often drink your health, in fact, I have just finished a glass. I have a bottle which rather resembles the figure of Marie Jeanne, and keep it in my room. It gives me strength to do my hard work. For I do not always eat regularly. I only pay attention to my stomach when there is nothing left to see. It is like my watch, I forget sometimes that it has stopped, or that it is two hours different from the town clocks, and cannot understand why the museums do not open on time.

I think that I have brought Belgium with me. There was snow on the way, and here it is raining. I hope all the same that when I leave it will be fine, as, according to the inhabitants, it usually is. Apropos, take care of my figure, but don't make her too wet. I would rather she were inclined to be firm. Take care of it, and don't let that rascal Paul touch it by himself.

Now for the voyage. Dinant is picturesque, and Rheims cathedral of a beauty that I have not yet met

in Italy. Your country is lovely. At Pontarlier (where I bought a sausage) there were two feet of snow. The Alps are wonderful at Lausanne, and impressive until Geneva, which is a fine city.

From the other side of the mountains he continued:

I stop a moment to listen; I hear a beautiful trio of voices. The refuge of the Italian arts is music. At Turin it rained. There was modern architecture in all the squares—very ugly, including Marochetti, an equestrian figure, replacing his sword.

Genoa: late artichokes, fresh peas, very pretty women, Rosette! The train will take me to Pisa, more than 100 little tunnels, just the same as in the Alps.

Through the wondrous streets of Florence wandered a broad-shouldered, slovenly dressed man in his middle thirties. Around the churches and in and out of galleries he ambled endlessly, his eyes burning with amazement. Always prone to ecstasy at the sight of things that pleased him, he now lost all touch with human beings, and lived in a different world.

He roved through the concentrated loveliness of Florence, where the jewels of a hundred towns have been dropped into one little pocket of en-

chanted land on the sullen Arno's bank. Rodin became intoxicated by the unbelievable splendor of the Renaissance.

In spite of his large boots, he walked as if on air, thinking of nothing but the marble *David* and the beautiful cast metal limbs wrought by those who had gone before. To passers-by he seemed just a peasant on holiday, one who had made a little money and thought he was seeing the world, or maybe an *Americano*, which, in itself, was enough to account for any eccentricity.

Wandering through the Duomo, Rodin found the shadowy *Deposition* of Michelangelo, lit by a great silver candlestick. A small choir boy walked innocently forward to blow out the flame. He was just the height of the candle, and as he tipped it towards his mouth, Rodin saw the sudden exquisite beauty of his face. The incident caught hold of his imagination in a weird manner, and that evening he thought no more about the wonders of sculpture. The lovely, intent child seemed to him a symbol of Death, who strikes out life carelessly and sweetly. This strange memory remained with him always.

To Rose he wrote:

All that I had seen from photographs and casts gave me no idea of the Sacristy of St. Lawrence. One must see those tombs in profile and at three quarters. I have passed five days at Florence yet not till today did I see the Sacristy.

The three great impressions I have received are Rheims, the walls of the Alps, and the Sacristy.

Dinant one cannot analyze the first time one sees it. It will not surprise you to learn that since the hour I arrived in Florence I have been studying Michelangelo. I think that the great magician has given me some of his secrets. Funnily enough, none of his pupils or masters resemble him. I have been studying his direct pupils and cannot understand it. The secret is in him alone.

In the evening I did some sketches, not of his works, but of all the stages, the systems I could imagine, which might help me to understand him. Well, I think I succeeded in catching the allure, the indefinable something which he alone knows how to give.

I am departing for Rome and Naples. I will return to Florence for one day, and reach Paris in a fortnight, and stay there for two days. Make the little coat for Auguste for that date, it ought to be finished already, so look after my figure, and give my best wishes to Joseph [Van Rasbourg], also to his lady and our neighbors.

Auguste Rodin.

P. S. It is a pity Joseph did not come. One lives so cheaply, 5 frs. a day, including everything except museums. Do not spend more than I gave you in case of unforeseen circumstances.

Do not make the figure too wet! I arrived at Rome two days ago. Write to me immediately at: Via Victoria, Hotel de Leone.



The layers of historic Rome that have worn the determination of many an ardent sight-seer were unfolded to this untidy, tireless man whose mind seemed to grasp and to retain as easily as his trousers gathered the mud. He discovered the foam-born beauty of Venice. Ancient Naples stretched at his feet her knowledge and her bay that is bluer than the eyes of Persephone. Rodin did not listen to lectures or puzzle over guide books. That which he came to see he understood instinctively.

On returning to Ixelles he felt fresh and inspired, as after hearing great music. His brain burned with a medley of new ideas which he could hardly wait to hammer into shape. Back at home, where Rose awaited him, he knew that he had discovered many things. The liberty of exaggeration, practised first by the Greeks and later by Michelangelo, was the secret of all movement in stone. To look alike, the flesh and marble must not be the same, for does not life come before form?

The technical knowledge needed to calculate an illusion must necessarily be far more extensive than that required merely to reproduce. The pagan artists had that power, and Rodin determined to acquire it also. The words of Constant Simon in

the decorator's studio came back: "Try not to see things at one angle only, but to form a conception of the whole."

The honest workman had been trying to explain the method used by the ancients. Rodin sat and pondered.

Even the illusion of color was used by the great sculptors. For the first time he noticed that the breasts of his old love, the *Venus de Milo*, were white with light, and the half-lit vaporous shadows of her body trembled with movement. She was a lovely and living thing, woven not of stone but of delicate greys and of lightness and darkness.

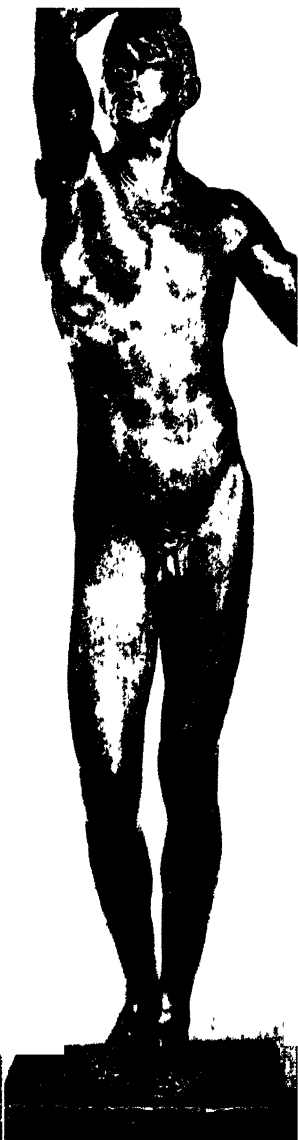
But many books have been written on these complicated themes, striking awe into the average man who picks them up (no matter how swiftly he puts them down again). The culmination of all that can be learnt does not yield a helpful philosophy. For in this most puzzling world there exists but one rule which can be relied upon for all occasions: nothing is as it seems; nor is it even the opposite of what it seems, but quite otherwise! If we were just told that white was black, all would be simple, but the authors of textbooks on art, and the compilers of biographies are generally

determined to prove that black is neither white nor black. Abandon, therefore, such words as *theory* and *technicality*, hard to spell and drear to look upon. Let only this be said. Rodin was not an average man. Heart and soul he strove towards perfection, and at last his twenty years of study were materializing. In the clay he felt a man's form, limbs stretching, muscles awakening to the dawn of life.

Rose carried volumes of Dante and Rousseau to her returned lord. Meanwhile in Paris young Auguste grew long and lanky, and had his ears boxed for being a nuisance.

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ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

JULES DALOU



## *Under an Iron Enchantment*

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Farewell the tranquil mind; farewell content!

SHAKESPERE

ALFRED NEYTS, a young Belgian soldier, was surprised at the requirements demanded of a model, but the new occupation amused him. He was pleasing to look at, extremely well built, and appreciated by the ladies of his acquaintance. Rodin had made friends with some officers, and saw in this private the man he needed. Neyts lived in a barracks nearby, and Rodin, determined to acquire him, asked his Captain's permission.

Having been authorized to pose, Alfred was now made to strip and wander all over the studio, climbing, stretching, lying down and getting up, as he felt inclined. Rodin watched his every movement

like a hawk, suddenly called on him to remain as he was, and made innumerable little clay models.

The Greeks were great judges of physical perfection because they were surrounded by unselfconscious nakedness. Rodin was sure that the human form could be adequately shown only in a natural and unconstrained position, but so accustomed are people to the limitations of clothes, that it took a long time to find an attitude that pleased him. The sculptor never started with a set idea in his head. He had to see the body as he wanted it, then he started work, and everything else was forgotten; but he could not explain the pose he desired in advance.

He determined that his best should go into this statue. Time did not matter.

"One must not hurry. One statue alone can establish the reputation of an artist," he remarked to Van Rasbourg.

Neyts proved a tireless model, and eighteen months later the result was a figure with some of the latent power of Michelangelo and the suppleness of a Donatello.

When the work was finished, Rodin named it *The Defeated*. Then, looking again, he changed

it to *The Man Awakening to Nature*. Perhaps he had felt his own spirit stirring in the lovely Belgian woods.

Those who love nature as he did have usually been forced to dwell in towns, for their intense feeling is the result of contrast.

The statue was first exhibited at the Cercle Artistique in January 1877, and won a mixed reception. Wise greybeards shook their heads and muttered disapprovingly, and giggling young ladies waxed enthusiastic, but the statue's creator relied on his own judgment only. If the world was not ready for his work, he must wait for the world to change. Genius cannot be molded to public opinion; it must struggle until the masses develop sufficient comprehension.

Rodin was surprised and indignant to read in *L'Etoile Belge* that "M. Rodin, one of our talented sculptors, who has not hitherto been noticed at the Salon, except for his busts, has exposed at the Cercle Artistique a statue which is intended to figure in the next Paris Exhibition.

"It will not be ignored, for its very strangeness attracts attention, and that attention is then held by a quality as rare as it is precious—that of life.



“To what extent this plaster has been molded from life is not a question to be debated here. We have simply wished to point out this figure, in which such moral and physical exhaustion is expressed, that without any proofs except the work itself, it seems to us that the artist wished to represent a man on the point of committing suicide.”

Rodin wrote a furious denial of having ever lowered himself to the unworthy practice of molding from life. But the mischievous gossip was increased by jealous rivals.

*The Man with the Broken Nose* had been accepted by the Salon in 1876, twelve years after it had been rejected, yet that marked progress. That spring Rodin decided to return to Paris and install himself as a serious sculptor. The seven fat years of peace were over. Rose obediently packed for him. He left her to stay on in the little cottage and look after his things. Kindly neighbors, hearing he was going to make his fortune in a greater world, wished him Godspeed.

A strange-looking individual arrived at the Gare du Nord. The porters were puzzled by a gaunt, bearded man who had made no arrangements, and

whose luggage consisted entirely of books and sculpturing accessories. Rodin never troubled about clothes when traveling.

A sculptor named Tournier lent him part of his studio at 3 rue de Bretonvilliers on the Île St. Louis. Three days running Rodin fussed about the station, pestering officials. On the third day his precious statue arrived intact.

He renamed it *The Bronze Age*. Then a profound depression fell upon him. To Rose, who was struggling with his affairs in Brussels, he wrote: "I have been to the Exhibition several times, and am going to work a bit before the Jury sit on April 5 or 6. Sometimes I feel utterly discouraged, it seems to me that my statue is not so good as I thought it. M. Falguière [a well-known sculptor and member of the Jury] found it very good."

The plaster cast of *The Bronze Age* was accepted by the Salon. The committee was puzzled by its realism. Several members took up the charge that Rodin had already indignantly refuted in Belgium. The sculptor was prepared to stand up to adverse criticisms, but to be again accused of having made his masterpiece by taking casts direct from life was

an indignity worse than he had expected. Until the suspicion spread abroad and became serious, he could not believe his ears. The statue was badly placed, and although the charge was obviously technically impossible, he had neither friends, money, nor a name to help him. In Paris he was still just the assistant of Carrier-Belleuse.

To Rose, he wrote sadly but without bitterness, "I am really unhappy. Falguière finds my statue beautiful, but others are saying that it has been molded from nature. He says it is a kind of praise, but that makes me suspicious."

He determined to do what he could with the small means at his disposal. A formal protest was lodged in the right quarter, and a friend appeared in M. Edmund Turquet (Under Secretary for Beaux Arts) who ordered an inquiry to be held.

The members of the Committee of Investigation were honest enough, but the prestige of those who had started the rumor overwhelmed them. The verdict came that they were unconvinced as to how the statue had been produced.

Rodin made another appeal. Some fellow sculptor advised him to have casts taken from life and photographed, so that they might be compared

with his own modeling. Such proofs were expensive, but he told Rose to have them made with the little money he had saved.

"My statue is admired by everyone, but they insist it has been molded!" he wrote to her. "I took my molds to the Exhibition, but will they trouble to compare them? I am tired, in need of money, and ought to be looking for a studio; that of Tournier is too small."

Either from disdain or sublime inefficiency, the parcel of photographs, molds, and proofs which Rodin took to the Jury was never opened.

Alfred Neyts, vastly indignant when he heard of the charge, wanted to come to Paris to give evidence. Rodin was touched, but he knew the trip would be of no avail, and the friendly officer would be compromised for having allowed Neyts to pose in defiance of military regulations.

The strain lasted for months, and money had to be earned somehow. A man must eat, whatever the whimsical turns of Justice! Rose received another letter.

My dearest Rose,

How are you getting on so far away? Have you found a little money? Here I am very worried. I do

not know what to do, having so many expenses and not a penny. When you arrive, you must give me a smack. My poor Rose, on Friday I will know if I have got anything; but the purchases of works are over, and mine has not been bought. It is a beautiful thing and they reject it, they say I have molded a corpse and stuck it up on its feet.

You will realize from this that life will be hard. My money is going to be put in a new effort, and if only I win! The future is pretty dark, and one can foresee misery. . . . If only the Jury had looked at the molds and photographs I took to the Exhibition. . . . I am limp both mentally and physically, for I work too much. If only you were here, I would be so happy to sleep in your arms.

Once again he wrote, "I trust in the strength of truth."

There was a project in London to erect a monument to Lord Byron. Rodin made a desperate effort to win the commission, and sent a small clay model, but his sketch was not noticed among the 37 other competitors.

At last she came to him. Little Auguste was fetched from Aunt Thérèse. Rose found her Rodin a changed man, and grew haggard with worry, for she saw that after all his hopes he was wounded to the quick. She would have given her life-blood to help. Long nights she lay silent be-

side him, knowing that he could not sleep and fretted for forgetfulness. Even she was unable to alleviate the heavy pain of his mind.

There was a Great Exhibition in 1878, and Rodin collaborated with a M. Legrain in the decoration of that monstrous two-fingered fungus, the *Trocadero*. Jules Desbois, the modeler, worked with him, and they became friends. Commercial houses were always ready for porcelain and jewelry designs. There was amusement as well as money in the ornamentation of such small objects.

Presently he could afford a diminutive studio, 36 rue des Fourneaux.

Here, under conditions of what he afterwards described as "une belle misère," Rodin worked on various creations as retorts to the accusing world. In search of models he visited low haunts frequented by workmen, and came across a peasant of the Abbruzzi, beautiful as a pagan god, and free from the mannerisms of the professional model.

The man, who had just arrived in Paris, had never posed before. Rodin told him to hold up his hand and walk as he did so. The sculptor's eyes narrowed as he absorbed the line and muscles of this man's body, and he immediately called

"Halt." Before the work was finished, Rodin decided to call it *St. John the Baptist*.

Though the body was perfect as Apollo's, yet the face had a sad wisdom, as of a voice crying in the wilderness. By next spring the plaster head was ready for the Salon. It was accepted without comment. Thirty years later, Gaudier wrote of this work, "In my opinion the *St. John* is more beautiful than the *Venus de Milo*, for I understand beauty differently from Phidias and his followers. He is a beggar who walks along, speaks, and gesticulates—he has a twentieth century workman's body, just as I see it and know it."

Many other of his works were in progress at the time, and in spite of his physique Rodin felt the strain. He was admirably built for the work, being broad, stocky, and strong as a bull; but the sculptor's is one of the most tiring jobs in the world. Rodin's hands were large, with the thick, sensitive fingers of a pianist. They were never still for one instant; always kneading, fidgeting, feeling the substance of things. Now he suffered from dyspepsia, and toiled for whole days in the little studio, foodless. Starvation cures most things, and sometimes stimulates a flagging inspiration. Rodin con-

ceived more ideas at this time than he could carry out, but he must have been weakened, for no man can drive his body, senses, brain, and nerves into action so fiercely for long.

Rose found that besides cooking and mending, she must now become a model. Her master could not bear to waste an hour, and always wanted to work from life. Her strong, rather unfeminine features showed up well in clay. Rodin accentuated her flowing hair and high cheek bones in a lovely bust, which he called *Mignon*. She smiled. After fourteen years she was still his *Mignon*!

Sometimes Rodin's kindness touched her deeply. She hurt her knee, and was laid up for several weeks. The doctor came frequently, so Rodin began collecting 50 centime pieces, and kept them in a drawer. When the day of reckoning arrived, Rose could not pay, and great were her lamentations. Rodin produced his savings, and behold, there was enough and to spare! How could she not love him?

He still did occasional work for his old master, and in 1879, when Carrier-Belleuse was made Art Director of Sèvres Pottery Works, he engaged Rodin to decorate vases. Always curious and



ready to make some quaint discovery, the sculptor decided that the loveliest shape for a vase could be found in the human torso as seen from the back, in sitting position, with the arms and legs extended in front. The French workmen must have felt extremely edified when this theory was gravely expounded to them. Howbeit, one of those vases was afterwards purchased by the State and preserved in the Sèvres Museum.

This work was in addition to his private sculpture, but the long walks to Sèvres proved a blessing. Rodin knew the delight of getting out on the hills again and exploring the river bank.

Sometimes the short figure of Rose accompanied him, keeping sturdily in step, but he preferred to walk alone and in silence. When the houses lessened, the peace of the river was his. The golden morning mists writhed in intangible forms over the barges, and evening threw a tangled mystery of shadows on the earth as he plodded homeward.

Rodin undertook some work for a sculptor named Laouste. He was modeling a group of cherubs, when a young sculptor named Alfred

Boucher happened to come in. This man (whose bronze *Runners* now stand in the Luxembourg Gardens) was in quest of work. He had passed through the Ecole des Beaux Arts, won the Prix de Rome, and thoroughly established himself in the academic world. Although ten years younger than Rodin, he understood the battle that faces poor artists. He loved art for her own sake, and had learnt that she is *la belle dame sans merci*.

Boucher noticed the thickset, red-bearded man, who carried out his work with amazing sureness and accuracy. In a few hours the task was finished. Boucher asked the sculptor's name. Rodin—the man who had caused *The Bronze Age* uproar! The man about whom everyone was talking!

Boucher could but believe what his eyes told him—Rodin was a genius. Off he rushed to Paul Desbois, his master, and Claude Chapu, both men of renown. Within a short time they had visited Rodin in his studio, and a crowd of influential artists gathered around him.

Appeals to officialdom had failed, but now eight strong champions leaped to Rodin's side. Another letter was written to Turquet, Under Secretary of

State, signed by Chapu, Carrier-Belleuse, Thomas Delaplanche, Paul Dubois and Chaplin Falguière. The cause was won.

Turquet, delighted, immediately awarded a third-place medal to *St. John the Baptist*, which was exhibited full length at the Salon. *The Bronze Age* was re-exhibited, and both statues were bought by the State for the Luxembourg.

This sudden change of fortune after a three-year struggle brought a great deal of publicity to the victim. Showers of friendly congratulations fell upon him, late it is true, but Rodin was not prone to sarcasm, and he knew that he was forcing his way up the ladder.

Turquet capped his happiness with a vague commission for a doorway to adorn the Palais des Arts Decoratifs. Dante had been a source of inspiration to Rodin ever since his journey to Italy. Now he again read the *Inferno*, and of that dim portal above which was written:

Through me you pass into the city of woe:  
Through me you pass into eternal pain:  
Through me among the people lost for aye.  
All hope abandon, ye who enter here.

He visualized a huge, cast-metal doorway in

which all phases of life were caught, a moveless inferno in bronze. "It will be covered with a great many small figures," he told Turquet, "and then at least I cannot be accused of taking moldings."

At night he dreamed of *The Gates of Hell*, and a thousand striving figures were woven in his brain. Ugolino dying of starvation; Paulo and Francesca, the immortals lost to all but love; beautiful pathetic Francesca, who said, "No greater grief than to remember joy when misery is at hand"; forms of seething fantasy frozen for ever in the toils of pain, of knowledge, and of sacrifice.

The middle-aged man still walked to and from his work at placid Sèvres, but the ghosts of Baudelaire and Dante walked with him, and the mists and shadows fell under an iron enchantment.

## *Mademoiselle Camille*

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Je suis belle, ô mortels! comme un  
rêve de pierre.

BAUDELAIRE

MANY ARTISTS were drawn to Rodin after they had seen his work. Besnard, Roll, Baffier, and Eugène Carrière (their names meant much in that forgotten Paris) became very friendly. They found a charming man of forty with simple taste, broad-shouldered, greatly-bearded, slow to speak, but with eyes quick as a hawk's. When questioned he was inclined to be incoherent, but his manners were perfect.

"I received an 18th-century education," he explained simply.

Rodin moved to a new studio in the rue d'Arras, and was progressing well enough when, one morn-



MIGNON  
(ROSE)



LA PENSÉE  
(CAMILLE)



ing, Boucher dropped in with an exciting announcement. He was just off for a six-months holiday in Italy, and a friend of his, a certain lawyer of good family, had asked him where he could send a daughter determined to study sculpture. Boucher had taken her as pupil, and, having a kindly nature, he thought to turn her over to Rodin while away. He had explained to her family that Rodin was the coming man in Paris, and took only the most promising pupils. As a personal friend he could induce him to give the girl lessons. Rodin was pleased at the idea, but he did not mention it to Rose.

Arrangements having been made, the maiden left her father in Villeneuve-sur-St. Pair, eager to devote her life to art in the great city.

Boucher took her to the studio and introduced her future master. Then off he went for six months with the happy conviction that he had succeeded in killing two birds with one stone (but without studying the nature of the birds in question).

It was unfortunate that Mlle Camille seemed so lovely to Rodin's eyes, for he was no adept at resisting beauty in women. Never had he shown such



enthusiasm over any pupil before. She was clever as well as charming, and showed real aptitude for modeling. She liked her master, worked hard under his tuition, and soon won a third-place medal at the Salon with *Grandmother*, a study of an old woman in a bonnet. Contrary to all his previous theories, Rodin decided that the talent was born in her, and was genuinely delighted at such rapid progress. The family were also pleased, but it was not long before they heard rumors that their darling was learning more than sculpture at the rue d'Assas, and behaving in a way not at all suitable for a nice girl.

Rodin could not help being Rodin; the young lady could not help being attractive. Without any intention of creating scandal, they fell in love. The romantic arrangements of Fate are usually dire. Camille was at the studio all day and most of the night, and no arguments prevailed.

The gentle girl seemed adamant, adopting in turn the role of model, mistress, and maid of all work. Camille was willing to give up everything for this strange master, and seemed perfectly happy cleaning his studio, posing for hours, and being roared at if she moved. Her strange, chiseled features

would have inspired any artist. Rodin left a head of her emerging from a rough block of marble; it was one of his first attempts at letting the stone remain with his work struggling from the very element, half hewn and then abandoned "as if he found the modern world beyond his shaping." This head was afterwards called *La Pensée*. It shows a well-bred, intelligent face, rather tense and tragic. Tragedy had not come to her then, but perhaps she foresaw it, even in her days of thoughtless youth.

Meanwhile the ignored Rose hovered hopelessly around the studio door, longing for the days in sweet Ixelles where there were no adventurous ladies after her man. Determination to get him back made her tactless, and whenever he did return home, frightful rows resulted. Peasant women have a great sense of possession and none of coquetry, so she stood little chance.

When poor Boucher returned a few months later, he found himself in a fine stew. The family, desperately lamenting the progress of their dear girl whose artistic urge had turned her down the road to ruin, were waiting to heap the blame on his head. They could do nothing with her; it was vain

to plead that those of her breeding did not scrub floors and live in open sin with untidy sculptors. In the callous way of youth she told them she was happy.

Deafened by angry words, Boucher promised to clear the matter up, and went straight off to Rodin's studio in the proper spirit of righteous indignation. The door was opened by the lovely Camille, her head tied up in a duster, and a brush in her hand. Rodin was engrossed with work in a corner. He greeted Boucher with artless innocence, but the enthusiastic smile faded when he saw the look on his friend's face.

Boucher was serious and terse. He explained the predicament which they had caused; but with his usual naïveté Rodin could not grasp what the fuss was all about. Why, she had won a "Third" medal almost immediately. What more could anyone expect? Why shouldn't they live together if they choose? What about the hetaerae of ancient Greece? Intellectual women must be free as their male companions. The family were of the type that refused to receive Pericles and Aspasia because they were not legally united, and cast Phidias into prison. Of course they were not en-

gaged. Everyone knew that Rose was his wife, except that they were not properly married.

"Que le monde est bête!" Rodin drew his hand across his brow. People seemed to be more interested in his love affairs than in his work.

With these and other arguments they baffled Boucher, until he was worn out by their childish logic. In vain he reasoned and explained. Camille shook her head contentedly, and for his part Rodin failed to see why he should not have "deux ménages" if he supported both and put up with the atrocious scenes that the good Rose was making.

That long suffering lady had been roused to a pitch of fury alien to her docile nature. Perhaps it was because her woman's instinct told her that for once Rodin was very deeply in love. To the end of her days she would turn white and tremble at the very name of Mlle Camille. It sufficed for Rose to break into a rage, and off Rodin went to spend his money on flowers for Camille, and not to return for days.

The situation grew strained. Camille made the fatal feminine mistake of adoring Rodin openly. When he tired of her incessant admiration, the drama became intolerable. The day dawned when

Rodin told Camille frankly their love must end. The blow was a hard one for the girl. After a fierce scene, she ran out of the studio, disillusioned and hurt beyond measure. They did not meet again, but Rodin knew that he would never forget the appeal in those brown eyes, the deep brooding eyes of his Venus of Villeneuve.

## *Death of Jean-Baptiste*

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I thank whatever gods may be  
For my unconquerable soul.

W. E. HENLEY

HAVING been foiled in their attempts to accuse Rodin of exact reproduction, the critics unabashedly charged him with violent sensationalism and lack of restraint. Having grown insensitive to the provoking words of others, and knowing his own powers of control, he did not heed them.

The French Government opened a competition for a monument to the National Defense, to be erected at the Rond Point of Courbevoie, where there had been fighting during the siege of Paris. Rodin hated war, and sent a group of two figures, a wounded soldier dying dejectedly against a pillar, and a fierce, shrieking woman raging over his limp

body. It seems a familiar picture to us who have a memorial in every village, but *The Genius of War*, as he called it, was considered too exuberant and unconventional. The sketch submitted was not even among the first thirty. The judges liked "taste," even in war and death. Barrias was given the commission.

No one dreamed of the thousands of deaths *The Genius of War* would eventually be used to commemorate, nor would Rodin have had the heart to look at his work again if he could have foreseen the future. In 1920 this very monument was unveiled to the heroic defenders of Verdun.

In his studio in the rue d'Assas, Rodin busied himself with a project for *The Gates of Hell*. His *Creation of Man* showed an Adam of tremendous strength, struggling with the power of his own form.

A foreign athlete nicknamed "Caillou" posed for this statue. He was a real cave-man, extraordinarily well developed. In the studio they nicknamed him "the man of the iron jaw." No doubt the maidens knew! In his twisting muscles Rodin saw the full expression of physical virility and surging life. Men die with the years, strength

fails, swift limbs grow still, passions are forgotten, but the beauty of this man he resolved to mold for eternity in stone.

The Salon had a laugh that year. Rodin could certainly produce surprises. Apparently both critics and public held the view that Adam should awake politely at God's call with a smile of alert innocence on his face, and Rodin had represented him as dragging himself from the earth. The sculptor did not worry over the jeers and protests, for he was having trouble with Eve. She was an English girl—he had discovered they had the best figures. "No women," he declared happily, "have such fine legs as the well-built English girls." This model was an unusually good specimen, a veritable goddess of Albion. Rodin was particularly delighted with his conception of her.

But alas, he had not reckoned with the serpent of that seductive apple tree. Eve had a less abstract admirer, and to the sculptor's horror she was lost to him before his statue was finished, for she bore a child to her thoughtless young man.

Rodin waxed truly furious. As a model she seemed irreplaceable. No other girl in all that city could be found with such fine hips. He had to



complete her by guess work. In vain he raved against the thoughtless folly of youth which dared to rob even art. Maternity, that most unimpressive ravager of beauty's hour, upset him for a second time. Nevertheless, *Eve* appeared at the Salon in the following spring, and not a voice was raised either in praise for her or against her, for she was the very soul of woman, unfathomable and fertile.

An invitation from Alphonse Legros was welcome to the disgruntled artist. The old friend of his drawing-school days had turned into a respectable professor. Having made his name with etchings and engravings, he had settled down to teach at South Kensington. In 1881 Rodin set out for his first visit to England. *The Man with the Broken Nose* was exhibited that year at the Grosvenor Galleries, and in Legros' house Rodin met the most interesting artists and intellectuals in London. In spite of his lack of sophistication, Rodin got on well with intelligent men. Sargent became friendly with him, and painted his portrait. It showed a powerfully built man of forty summers, thin in spite of wide shoulders, and rather haggard.

Baden-Powell, the brother of the General, and young Robert Browning, the offspring of Robert

and Elizabeth, the poets, were among his admirers. His simplicity charmed all. Though he was quiet when many people were about, they soon discovered that no one could talk more entertainingly on a theme that interested him. If his remarks had not the swift sparkle of champagne, they had the depth and substance of beer, and never an Englishman was born but loved that cool, gold drink. Rodin found himself discussing by the hour with some congenial soul a diverse mixture of things, such as the relation of mathematics to art, Chinese sculpture, or the reason why English girls have long, straight legs.

During this visit, ready to try his hand at anything, Rodin found a new recreation in dry-point engraving. It was one of the most difficult ways of drawing, but he enjoyed it, and was quick to develop a talent. One of his first efforts, a delicious little study called *Le Printemps*, showing a woman's form with a multitude of babies around her head, is now in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

On his return to Paris, he taught Auguste to engrave, but as soon as the boy showed promise his father grew jealous, and gave him no credit for

compositions that were unusually good. Later on he pretended some of Auguste's compositions were his own—without a bad conscience!

Rodin resigned from the Sèvres Manufactory where he had been designing for three years. He was overladen with work, and Jules Desbois, that pleasant fellow who had been his partner when they were employed on the *Trocadero*, was proud to do fine-hewing for him.

Besides Carrière and those artists who had wished to know him after seeing *St. John*, Rodin was still friendly with Dalou, his other companion of the drawing-school days, who had passed into the Beaux Arts when Rodin was refused. Dalou bewailed the time lost in that establishment, but he had made great progress as a sculptor. Like many artists, he was infected with the fever of political dissent. After the Commune he had become violently excited, and finally made himself such a nuisance that he was driven over to England.

When he returned, Rodin did a bust of this esthetic if unpractical democrat, who did not care for the work. In later years the two were separated by quarrels.

Jean-Paul Laurens, another old friend, painted a

portrait of Rodin, and induced him to pose as one of the warriors in a fresco he was doing in the Pantheon. Rodin appeared in Merovingian attire, assisting at the death of St. Genevieve. Although their ideas differed greatly, these two men got on well together, for they had the unusual virtue of admiring each other's work without agreement. When the portrait was finished, Rodin asked Laurens to sit for his bust. His round, meridional head, and unusual jaw proved of great interest. He had a rather primitive face and an expression of sublime detachment, as of one aloof and invulnerable to mundane things. His eyes have been described as exalted and haunted by far visions, but in spite of this distressing tendency, he was a great worker. The very antithesis of Greuze, he painted robust and savage things.

"Must I go down to posterity with my mouth open?" Laurens asked meekly enough. The bust certainly had the appearance of one pausing to take breath, but Rodin was enchanted by one of his favorite ethnographic discoveries. "From the shape of your skull, you are probably descended from the Spanish Visigoths, and the chief characteristic of their type is the jut of the lower jaw,"

said Rodin sternly. Such a reply silences criticism!

This bust was in the Salon along with *Eve*, and the high-hats condescended to remark that it had the "savor of Greek statuary." Better still, an English critic hailed it as "a masterpiece of art, combining the most unflinching truth with an envelope of style that gives it Homeric dignity."

One day Rodin met a bluff, red-bearded Englishman, who later became his friend and champion. W. E. Henley, poet and critic, was one of those rare spirits who have known both poverty and pain and yet avoided bitterness. As a boy he suffered from tuberculosis in his legs. The nineteenth-century doctors had amputated one foot, and kept him in a hospital for two years. Robert Louis Stevenson had then been the only friend who visited him. Yet he learned to live with a vigor and courage unknown to the hale, daring his own contemporaries, and laughing even at that "Arch-Discomforter," Death.

"I've always felt," said Henley, "that if I had not been a blessed cripple, I could have taken the earth in my hand and thrown it into the sun."

The boisterous soul of the hobbling, unvanquished Titan was in those words.

Henley, a free-lance at the time, saw force in Rodin's work, and determined to help him to fame. Rodin was too much of an artist to be his own showman. Although ingenious, he could not explain his works to the public. The pen of Henley made his genius known to the English people.

On November 23, soon after they had met, Henley wrote inquiringly about *The Gates of Hell*.

"I hope that large door about which we were talking is getting on well, and as you wish?"

In the same month Legros sent Rodin an English pupil, Mr. G. Natorp, one of the celebrated amateurs in which that epoch abounded. He had intended to winter in Italy to study a little sculpture, since so far he had only drawn and painted. The Professor suggested his working under Rodin for a couple of months. Diligently he took up abode in the Boulevard Montparnasse, and, becoming enchanted by his master, remained half a year.

Twice a week Rodin came to his studio, and, according to Natorp's testimony, "not the least admirable lessons were those when we left the

studio after dark, and when, talking most delightfully about his art, he would take me to a cafe, call for pen, ink, and paper, and illustrate his views on composition by masterly drawing." Oh, cafes of starlit Paris! They are the last poor harbors on earth where men may forget their troubles in elaborate discussion, and sitting in the precincts of the Nine subtle Muses, whose names are so hard to remember, talk about Art till dawn! Within these portals even pale beer can turn human blood to fire, and more poetry has been written on their table cloths than would paper the universities of Harvard and Yale. Stranger depths must have been fathomed in those little straw chairs that lie between heaven and hell, and more dreams born than would build a bridge to heaven. Most venerable cafes of Paris!

This attractive form of education soon lured Baden-Powell and young Browning, a diligent lad, who could hardly be expected to live up to his antecedents. To the delight of Natorp and his "chums," the master attended their monthly dinners. Although he had no party-spirit himself, this fact induced Sargent to come, as well as de Nittis, Besnard, Edelfelt, Collin, Gervex, and many







other desirable artists. If their names mean little to us now, let us reflect that in fifty years' time ours may stand for less. Then, in the proper spirit of dismal humility, learn that these gatherings were festooned with sprightly inspiration and decorous gaiety.

That winter Legros came over on a visit to Natorp. In the Englishman's studio he sat for his bust to Rodin, who modeled a mask as serious and intent as the professional soul behind.

This charming existence rolled on till May came, and the white dust of Paris grew hot to English feet. Natorp left, with the firm intention of coming back in the autumn, and Rodin turned from his eager young friends to important orders.

Turquet had been working on his behalf, and the Government offered him free premises in the rue de l'Université at the Repository of State Marble. He accepted gratefully, and established his headquarters in the large, quiet studio where there was room for all his work; but still he kept a smaller, secondary studio where he could escape when necessary.

He needed plenty of space, for there were innumerable parts of *The Gates of Hell* to be shel-

tered, while his series of busts stretched down the years like a diary of all the men he had known.

Two orders arrived from South America, one for a statesman with the piquant name of Benjamin Vicuña Mackenna, and the other for a general called Patricio Lynch. Both gentlemen appeared to be of British descent. Rodin designed small models, and sent them to Chile. For some mysterious reason they were never returned, and the matter fell through. About the same time, a more or less official letter from the State arrived, ordering a monument to Victor Hugo. David d'Anger had been commissioned, but he died, leaving his work incomplete.

Natorp returned in October, and Rodin visited him twice a month until the following June. When Natorp went back to his house in Palace Gardens Terrace, his master accompanied him for a few weeks. Rodin loved London, and knew how to enjoy himself better than any young lady during her first season. He went to all the galleries and heard the best music. Only the growling chaperon Work-to-do drew him back to Paris.

When the sons of Thérèse Cheffer dispersed,

they were forced to leave their mother in a house run by nuns in the rue Violet. Rodin worried about her, but there was nothing he could do for the delightful, generous, impractical aunt who had been his friend through much adversity. Poor sweet Thérèse lived to be very old, and to the end she was loved by all.

Rose's next job was to pose for a head called *Bellona*. Her strong, handsome features looked well as the war goddess; and a helmet suited her better than a dust cap. Rodin often noticed there was more character in her face than in that of the average woman. She needed it to stick by him.

Old Jean-Baptiste Rodin still lived with them in the Faubourg St. Jacques, over eighty and very feeble. Rose nursed him devotedly until the end, and Rodin was grateful, for he loved his honest, hard-working father.

In 1883 the old man quietly died. After many years of blindness, perhaps he hardly regretted going. But his son was silent and pensive for many weeks. At least Jean-Baptiste must have known that the obstinate boy had been right in those distant, distressing days when he insisted upon following a strange craft. And the two women support-

ing young Auguste had been right. If there is indeed a heaven from which the dead look down on those they love, surely old Rodin and his wife and Maria were permitted to smile with celestial pride when they saw that familiar, red-bearded figure walking with the great men of Paris in all the glory of his first top hat.

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## Figures in Paris

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Why am I not . . . one of those men whose effigies  
Have a destiny which, if chance overturns them  
Makes it impossible to cast the august bronze  
Into anything but bells for prayer  
Or cannons for the fray!

VICTOR HUGO

RODIN turned to the Victor Hugo monument. He had a friend, one Bazire, secretary to *La Marseillaise*, who was a fervid worshipper of the old poet, and had started the idea of publicly celebrating his eightieth birthday, when Victor Hugo came on his balcony to greet the huge acclaiming crowd. Hugo liked this dramatic action, so Bazire introduced Rodin without difficulty; but when the sculptor timidly asked permission to do a bust, the Olympian eyebrows descended in a terrible frown.

For one thing, Victor Hugo thought he had been

quite satisfactorily represented by David d'Anger. Still more unfortunate was the fact that he had just suffered the martyrdom of thirty-eight unsuccessful sittings to an artist with the appropriate name of Villain.

The old man was not amused at the prospect of catering again to the whimsicalities of art. There were more enjoyable ways of spending his last days.

"I can't prevent your working if you must, but I warn you that I won't pose. You can make your own arrangements but don't expect me to change a single habit for you."

It was not an encouraging consent, but Rodin lost no time in making a number of sketches. He was allowed to come and go as he pleased, and to watch the old man taking meals and entertaining friends.

Unfortunately, Victor Hugo seemed possessed by a very devil of energy, and certainly he could not have had much sense of vanity, for old men seldom look their best while eating. His face was never still for one instant. When not chewing gustily, he was talking, and his eyebrows, when not lifted with vivacious merriment, were emphasizing a scowl. Nor was it his wont to indulge in

naps like old folk. He slept only under cover of darkness, and then no doubt he twitched in the turbulency of his dreams. Not even pity for the distracted artist could induce him to repose.

Rodin struggled on, undaunted by this thankless task. He brought his sculptor's tripod and clay, and was promptly put in a veranda because of the mess. Victor Hugo usually sat with his friends in the drawing room, and Rodin had to hover pathetically around.

He would watch from some hidden corner, then dash suddenly from the room to try and imprint some elusive expression in the clay. It was distracting work, for he often lost his impression in the rush, and without daring to add a single stroke, had to creep back to where his heartless model discoursed volubly, the center of admiration and laughter.

In spite of these difficulties, Dalou also wished to do a bust of the poet, and asked for access. Rodin, only too willing to help a friend, introduced him gladly. Shortly afterwards Victor Hugo died, and Dalou had to be content with a death mask for model. Looking at his own finished bust, Rodin saw that it was vivid and intense; he had managed



to catch a very living resemblance in those frantic charges. With a sigh of relief he resolved never again to force anyone to pose for him.

For many years Rodin worked on the monument, but committees proved even more difficult than the poet. A rough model, intended for a low position in the Pantheon, was duly submitted for criticism. The committee members, perched on the summit of a mountain of cardboard rockwork, proceeded with pomp and loud voices to proclaim objections.

Rodin had understood that his figure was to be sitting. Now he was asked to design one standing. M. Larroumet, the director of the Beaux Arts made a spirited fight for the original figure, advising Rodin to finish it for a site in the Luxembourg Gardens. Rodin modified it for the open air, and eventually it was placed in the Palais Royal.

Thoroughly bored by the whole muddle, Rodin did his best to please the committee, and in a second model, clearly designed to appeal to their sentimentalism, Victor Hugo was shown walking beneath a cliff in the island of his exile. Sad, realistic weeds grew at his feet, and a bevy of ocean

sirens gazed anxiously from the waves. It was completed, but never used.

Rodin continued doing etchings of his busts and other subjects which amused him. Large portfolios of these were hidden away in drawers and other untidy places, until the day when they became a fashionable craze.

In February 1884, a letter came from Henley, saying, "I hope to see you this next May, as we agreed for you to do my bust. When I left you in Paris, I had an idea; it was to get you to do the bust of my friend Robert Louis Stevenson. I proposed it to his father, and he was delighted; so I arranged that Stevenson should be in Paris with me, and that you should model our two portraits at the same time. Unluckily Stevenson has been dangerously ill, and I fear we must put off doing his till another moment."

Henley arrived in May, and his huge bearded head and rugged features were ideal material for Rodin's style. They had much in common, these two, both walking through life with gusto, and hiding streaks of sentimental gentleness beneath an

exterior gruffness. When completed, the bust was sent to Henley's little house in Shepherd's Bush, where Robert Louis Stevenson was a frequent visitor.

Henley's brilliant pen now proved of assistance, for he had become editor of *The Magazine of Art*. There were many letters between him and Rodin. One of them from the sculptor runs: "I have sent you a photograph which seems to me a very good one. It is the one I should choose for engraving. As it is rather black, I have sent a paler copy, so that the engraver may discover the details he would not see in the black copy; but the dark one is the most effective; and the beauty of its powerful impression, like a Rembrandt, pleases me exceedingly."

Carrier-Belleuse wanted his portrait done by his old employee. Together they remembered and laughed. Twenty years before Rodin had turned up at the studio with a photographer's introduction and asked for work. Looking back through the gilded mist of time, Carrier-Belleuse realized how inaccurately he had judged the man before him.

It was kindly, energetic Laurens who (in spite

of his round skull and peculiar jaw) got Rodin an order from Calais for a statue of Eustache St. Pierre. This old man had been Mayor of the city when it was captured by Edward III of England. It had been decreed, in the curious, illogical way of those times, that in order to save the other inhabitants six citizens should accept a willing death. Eustache St. Pierre was followed by Jean d'Aire, Jean de Fiennes, Andrieux, and two brothers, Jacque and Pierre de Wissart, names carrying a strange grandeur and beauty. Out from the town gates straggled the little procession. Six honest men walked out of their homes, leaving everything, even life, behind. Froissart describes them, "bare-headed, barefooted, nooses around their necks and the keys to the city and to the castle in their hands."

No offer could have delighted Rodin more. The spirit of those grim, medieval days had often captured his imagination. If there was one thing he understood as well as the art of Phidias, it was the beauty of Gothic faith. Before long, he decided that the single figure of Eustache St. Pierre would not suffice. 'Six men had sacrificed their lives, and the whole group must be represented.

Only fifteen thousand francs had been collected,

and the sculptor was politely informed that he could add the extra figures at his own expense. Alight with inspiration and unburdened by financial sense, he set happily to work, although only a miracle could prevent him from losing money on the venture. In July 1882 the Committee examined a rough model, and had the grace to approve without comment.

At about the same time, it was decided to erect a monument at Nancy to Claude Gelée of Lorraine. He had been born at Champagne in 1600 of poor parents, but nearly eighty years of his life were spent in Rome. Of peasant stock, like Rodin, he had a primitive adoration of the sun. Both dawn and dusk of day he painted, harbors at sunset and sunrise, the shadowy sea, and the rich golden meadows at noon. In those times there were patrons of art instead of state committees, and even while this man lived his pictures were bought by kings and nobles. Rodin thought wistfully of how much easier it might be to pander to one man to whom wealth and culture were an inheritance, than to satisfy the demands of the middle classes.

A competition was opened, and twelve artists,

including the well-known Falguière, sent in rough models. Rodin was lucky, for one of the judges was his friend and supporter Roger Marx, and his sketch was chosen by a majority of one. In the explanation of the committee's requirements, he read: "The preoccupation in this project has been to personify in the most tangible manner possible, the genius of the painter of light, by means of a composition in harmony with the Louis XV style of the capital of Lorraine. In Claude Lorrain's face, surrounded with air and light, it is proposed to express the painter's attentive admiration of the scenery amidst which he stands. The idea is that the statue itself should be in bronze, the socle, with its decorative group, in stone."

Rodin gave his fervid imagination a run with the "decorative group." He had always wanted to do equestrian statues and use the sketches he had made in various market places, but he had never before had the chance. The result was that a beautiful Apollo galloped his horses from a cloud of rock and took all the attention away from Claude Lorrain, who stood, palette in hand, in common, workman's clothes. It was a monument more to the artist's inspiration than to Claude. How could

an ordinary mortal hope to compare with the Sun God?

Rodin was slowly learning to cope with the committee mentality, and he defended his work in suitable style.

“My Claude Lorrain has found, and he is admiring what he always found, what he always admired, and what we find and admire in his pictures—a splendid sunrise. The broad orange light bathes his face, intoxicates his heart, provokes his hand armed with a palette. I have put him à palette so that the good workman may be recognised in him. The resemblance I caught in this way. The best and only likeness we have of him is just Marchal’s face, the painter Marchal. This is a happy chance for me, and flattering to Marchal. So I have made a living Claude Lorrain instead of a sheet of paper more or less covered with black strokes. As regards the soul, the thought, the genius of Claude, I had his pictures, in which he has put the sun and himself.”

This clarifying outburst was written in just the style to impress a committee.

While he was working on both these monuments, another order came. On his return from

Brussels, Rodin had been friendly with a young painter from the Meuse, who had won all the prizes in his village. At fifteen, Bastien Lepage came to Paris where, from three to seven in the icy hours of early morning, he earned his living by sorting letters. The frail temperamental boy became a famous artist within a few years.

In England he swiftly won a reputation by a small curious portrait of Albert Edward, Prince of Wales. But most of his masterpieces were of peasants working in the fields, or of villages at dusk.

He was the last love of the enchanting little Marie Bashkirtseff, who often wrote of him in her *Journal*.

"What he has—that incomparable artist—is only found in Italian religious pictures—when artists painted and believed."

No more tragic figures than those two can be found in the history of art. Like wounded moths, half shadow and half flame, they fluttered across the page. Both were geniuses, both loved life and beauty with a delicious passion, and both died pathetically young.

Marie Bashkirtseff recorded every detail of her misery.



Bastien Lepage is getting worse and worse,  
And I can't work.  
My painting won't be done.  
That's all, that's all, that's all!

On October 20, 1884, she wrote the last entry in the diary she had kept for eleven years.

"Despite the marvelous weather, Bastien Lepage came here instead of going to the Bois. He can hardly walk; his brother holds him up under both arms, almost carrying him.

"And once in a chair, the poor child is worn out. What misery is ours! And to think that worthless people are well!"

She knew the worth of her genius and that of her love. Bitter was her resentment against the healthy, stupid concierges of this world! A few days later the lovely Russian girl died, aged twenty-four. *Meeting*, the picture she exhibited that year, was bought by the Luxembourg.

Bastien Lepage soon followed his lady, and his native village of Damvilliers decided to raise a statue to him by public subscription. Rodin had always known the young man homely and nature-loving and reproduced him so. "I have represented Bastien Lepage," he explained gravely,



VICTOR HUGO  
(DRY POINT)



LLONE (DRY POI





THE CITIZENS OF CALAIS

“starting in the morning through the dewy grass in search of landscapes. With his trained eye he espies around him the effects of light or the groups of peasants.”

But this committee was wary. Even such a sugared pill as this did not appease them. They were determined to have a real hero.

“Too naturalistic,” they said, “especially in the garments.”

Only the repetition of hopeless experience finally taught Rodin to ignore wearisome advice.

## Auguste, Jr., Stevenson, and London

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God didn't make the sky for us not to look at. Science is a veil; lift it. See! Search for Beauty!

*Les Cathédrales de France*—RODIN

RODIN'S morals would make an interesting study for the Freudians who believe that all artistic energy is the result of sublimated or repressed sex. Like many artists he loved woman in the abstract, but in practice made quite a different matter of it. To Rodin, all the women he met were merely objects of delight to be enjoyed, modeled, and then forgotten, unless they were ready to cook and sew, as Rose did. He was brutal to his only son.

If young Auguste had been a girl, he might have led a less wretched existence. He had talent but no charm, and got on his father's nerves. In spite of Rose's efforts to protect him, he was beaten,

starved, and occasionally kicked into the street. His life became a nightmare. Kindly Boucher often sheltered and fed the lad, whose whole character must have been embittered before adolescence.

Rodin seems to have had no conscience. His treatment of his only son is indefensible. He refused even his name, so that the boy had to take that of his mother, and was known as Auguste Beuret. This incomprehensible cruelty is the greatest stain on a delightful, if somewhat casual, nature. Even in the animal kingdom his attitude can be compared only to that of tomcats when they come across their own male kittens.

When Auguste was twenty, he felt that he could bear home life no longer and departed. A year later he was called for military service. Rodin saw him off when he went to join his regiment at Nancy.

"Well, idiot, you're good for nothing else, so at least try to get some stripes."

Such a goodbye from a father cannot have made the boy's heart beat with self-confidence. Nor was it likely that he sowed wild oats in a peach orchard on an allowance of 20 francs a month.

Now that their unenviable offspring was out of the way, his parents moved to a small apartment at 7 rue de Bourgogne. On account of his outlays as a sculptor Rodin could not afford to spend much on furniture or decoration. Rose, luckily for her, was happy in modest surroundings, and neither one wanted to entertain. Rodin was sought after for smart parties, but society meant nothing. Not that he shrank from it, but he had never learned to judge the standards of wealth or rank (which are matters quite different from breeding) and was too frank to try to appear interested by things that bored him. His friends were either literary or artistic and he had not time to be a poseur. A favorite haunt was the *Bon Cosaque Club* whose members included de Maupassant, Mallarmé, Becque, and Roll. The salon of Mme Liouville, wife of a doctor-deputy was another place where he was often found conversing at his ease.

Symbolism had been in the air for several years. Silently, gradually, it spread over Europe, replacing Romanticism in art as well as in literature. Wagner's mysterious music was its herald, and gradually the new creed developed until it found perfect re-

flection in the poetry of Verlaine. Paris in the Eighties was aflame with it. There were hidden meanings in everything, and each artist strove to be a shade cleverer than was possible.

Symbolism means power of suggestion. A material symbol can set the mind on the road to infinity; therefore the aim of a masterpiece should not be mere portrayal. The power of a creation must begin where it appears to end, for the repetition of a living form is nothing unless the living spirit be caught. There must be no sense of finality. Great artists had known this since all time, but now the idea became a doctrine. Men died in the effort to explain their souls by reticence. Instead of trying to outdo others, each was engrossed in excelling himself.

Genius is never independent. Artists are born of certain traditions and are bound to be affected by the tendencies of their age. Like Debussy in the musical world, Rodin did not have to study this supernatural movement to be guided. Instinctively he used his technique not only to reveal a likeness but to make it vibrate with his own indefinable exaltation. In his studio he slipped into another world. After a time he was hardly con-



scious of the chisel in his hand, and worked in a trance like that which fell on those who walked into Faery . . . a land where the sun grows suddenly warmer, the flowers are brighter, and the air is always sweet with apple blossoms; a land where there is neither time nor death. Most people have known it at some moment between waking and sleeping, and today the Theosophists have given it a new name. Some of them who are familiar with the place assure us that all art flows from river-like sources in the multi-colored fields of the Astral Plane.

To return to more earthly topics. Verlaine wrote a few lines:

Je me souviens  
Des jours anciens  
Et je pleure.

In that wistful understatement lay all the despair and bitter longing of his impossible life. In the same way, Rodin sculptured a marble Danaïd, one of the fifty daughters of the King of Argos who stabbed their husbands on their bridal night and were condemned to pour water into sieves for ever after. She sounds a legendary figure, unsympathetic to modern tastes, but Rodin put all the

futility and weariness of humanity into her exhausted and aching young limbs. How many gallons of water have women had to pour into the sieve-like vessels of their lives?

When Henley next came to Paris he was accompanied by Robert Louis Stevenson, whom he introduced to Rodin. Two more different men could scarcely be imagined. Stevenson was delicate, slender beyond belief, and as fragile in build as the other two were robust. Although the opportunity to sit for his bust never occurred again, he was impressed by Rodin's sculpture. Mrs. Stevenson, however, was not of the same opinion. She did not approve of her husband's friendship with Henley, thinking him too boisterous; and when Rodin, with his usual naïveté, showed her some unconventional works which he thought interesting and beautiful, she was deeply shocked. "Horrid old man," she called him, "who disgusted me with the indecent statues he had made." It just showed the type of men that Henley liked!

In France the literary output of the nineteenth century took second place to the artistic production. Rodin was by now a leading artist, but he

still had to fight his way abroad. The English press called him the "Zola of sculpture," and in 1886 his work was refused by the Royal Academy for not observing the "decencies which the best traditions of sculpture impose" (i.e., for not being like the Albert Memorial).

Stevenson immediately wrote a gallant defense in a letter to the *Times*: "Monsieur Rodin's work . . . is no triumph of workmanship lending an interest to what is base, but to an increasing degree as he proceeds in life, the noble expression of noble sentiment and thought. . . . The public are weary of statues that say nothing. Well, here is a man coming forward whose statues live and speak, and speak things worth uttering. Give him time, spare him nicknames and the cant of cliques, and I venture to predict this man will take a place in the public heart."

The Royal Academy apologized.

About this time Rodin produced a group called *Eternal Spring*. Knowing to what extent a title may enhance a work of art to the general public, he gave most of his studies exotic names. Rodin kept no definite subject in mind while working,

but when he looked at this composition of man and woman, it suddenly reminded him of the sweet, outside world of which he now saw so little. With a slight pang he remembered the loveliness of the misty, fertile earth lifting her face to the scarlet-fingered sun, and suddenly the name came . . . Eternal Spring!

He sent a small model to Stevenson, as a token of thanks for all that he had done in England. Stevenson wrote back from Bournemouth:

"The *Printemps* duly arrived, but with a broken arm; so we left it, as we fled, in the care of a statue-doctor. I am expecting every day to get it, and my cottage will soon be resplendent with it. I much regret about the dedication; perhaps it won't be too late to add it, when you come to see us. . . . The statue is a present, too beautiful a one, even; it is the friend's word which gives it me for good."

He was suffering from weakness of the lungs, and soon left for the South Seas, never to return. *Eternal Spring* and various other Rodin statues went with him. One day the Stevenson family showed them to some Samoan chiefs. They

looked admiringly at the embracing nude figures, beautiful in their polished bronze, and then inquired politely:

"They are your relations?"

Bracquemond, the famous etcher, was an intimate friend of Rodin's. He introduced the sculptor to the de Goncourts, who were the center of literary Paris. One day he brought Edmond de Goncourt to the studio where Rodin was working on *The Citizens of Calais*.

The sculptor returned from the azure fields of invention to greet them politely. De Goncourt afterwards confessed he thought "the appearance of the place odd with its models including two dried-up cats!" But in spite of this unsavory background, the men became friendly.

They met again at a dinner, and Rodin talked freely about his long days of toil, uninterrupted except for a brief lunch, and of the exhaustion he felt at having to work on the larger statuary from a ladder. A mutual interest in Japanese art appeared. In those days even busy men could keep diaries, and under February 26, 1888, de Gon-

court wrote the following revelations, which are interesting, if incoherent:

“Rodin confesses to me that for the things he executes to satisfy him completely when they are finished he needs them to be first made in their definite size, since the details he puts in afterwards detract from the movement; and it is only by considering these sketches in their natural size and during long months that he realizes the movement they have lost, movements he restores by taking off the limbs and putting them on again only when he has recaptured the dynamic energy of his figures.”

Octave Mirbeau, a friend of the de Goncourts, was a writer who had defended Rodin in his most difficult days. Now he visited the sculptor for weeks at a time and discovered that in the presence of Nature this silent man became an extraordinary talker: “a talker full of interest, a connoisseur of a heap of things which he has learnt by himself, and which range from theogonies to the processes of all the arts.”

Nearly every Sunday Rodin visited the Cladels in their country house. Rodin found his opposite

in M. Cladel, who was a typical Frenchman—alert, expansive, excitable, and quick in repartee. The sculptor would arrive looking shy and awkward as a schoolboy, listen quietly to the conversation, and sit dreamily in the garden which he loved. Cladel's friends could not help laughing at the "illustrious ingenue," but little escaped those keen eyes and that bent head. It was not because of shyness that he seemed tongue-tied, but on account of an unusual habit of observing and judging in silence. When the occasion demanded he could certainly say what he meant. Rodin's appearance as well as his reserve was utterly un-Latin. The red beard was streaked with silver, and in his grey eyes the North still glinted.

The voluble, artificial men who met him there could not understand his earnest simplicity, and were astonished by his sleepy manners and old-fashioned, humorless respect for talent.

Rodin was interested in meeting people, but he did not care what they thought of him. "Curious old fellow," they remarked, watching him ramble in his ill-cut clothes (especially brushed by Rose for the occasion). Even Mlle Judith Cladel, the decorous young lady of the house, could not resist

a titter when he wandered for a stroll through the woods looking like a mischievous overgrown leprechaun. But "Gaffer Rodin" knew how to enjoy himself, and missed little in life.

In spite of his heavy appearance he was sensitive and alert, like the forest animals. No one ever domesticated Rodin. The Cladels remarked that he had the sincerity of a big dog. He was indeed as happy and free from self-consciousness, but there was no affection in his nature as in a dog's. In all the world he cared for no one and nothing except that cruel taskmistress called Art.

Fortunately Rodin had a curious attraction for literary men. They found him amusing to talk to, and many of his friends defended him with pens against the attacks of the public and other artists. Two Americans, W. C. Brownell and T. H. Bartlett, made his acquaintance and took up his cause with zeal. On their return to the United States they displayed typical efficiency in publishing articles which eulogized and explained his sculpture.

One day a poor old Italian widow came to the studio, and Rodin induced her to pose. As a rule he liked to mold beauty, but in her withered body



and fallen breasts he saw a poignant tragedy that youth could not portray. Sooner or later it comes to all, whether accepted with bitterness or with calm; age is relentless.

Quand je pense, lasse! au bon temps,  
Quelle fus, quelle devenue;  
Quand me regarde toute nue,  
Et je me voy si très-changée,  
Pauvre, seiche, maigre, menue,  
Je suis presque tout enragée!

Qu'est devenu ce front poly,  
Ces cheveux blonds, . . .  
C'est d'humaine beauté l'yssues!

Villon, who loved life so well, had known that, and Rodin, a great reader of late, named his work with words that had been written long ago. *Celle qui fut la belle Heaulmière*, otherwise known as "She who had been the beautiful courtesan."

Natorp had never forgotten Rodin's last words. "Now I have given you a compass by means of which, with Nature as a guide, you can steer yourself." "What an admirable master!" the Englishman exclaimed.

When Rodin paid him another visit, he gave a dinner for the august sculptor, attended by most of

the well-known artists in London. Rodin loved the city. The grave aristocratic squares were a delight to him. He would walk about with some friend (for he never learned to speak the tongue), and in the Piccadilly of the Eighties, he discoursed on the pleasant, leisured life achieved by the English.

Most of his time was spent in the British Museum. John Lavery asked if he did not think that the *Victory of Samothrace* was the greatest Greek production. Rodin reflected seriously and remembered hours of boyhood spent in the Louvre gazing at that lovely work.

"No," he replied at last, "the most beautiful thing Greece ever produced is in your British Museum. In my opinion the group of *Three Fates* from the pediment of the Parthenon forms the most perfect composition in the world."

## *Of Those Who Walk Alone*

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Beauty is character, truth, nothing more.

HENRI GAUDIER

RODIN held an exhibition at the George Petit Gallery, together with his friend Claude Monet. It proved sensational, and enhanced his reputation in Paris. In the same year he was created Chevalier of the Legion of Honor.

Puvis de Chavannes, who lived in his own world, where all beauty was grey and wistful as the dawn, became very friendly. Delightful, alert, and full of temperament, he had the emotion of a child and the wisdom of a philosopher.

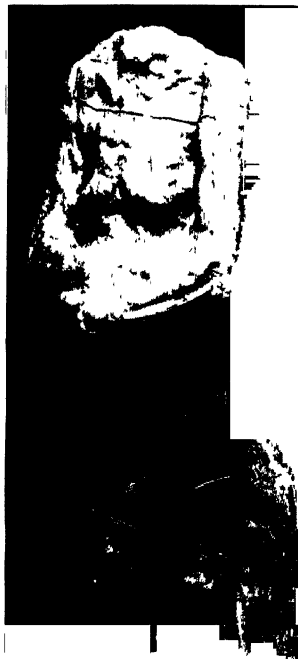
Rodin admired his work tremendously, and paid a sincere compliment in saying that he would as gladly shake his hand as that of Nicholas Poussin.





STUDY OF AN OLD  
WOMAN STANDING

THE OLD COURTESAN  
(CELLE QUI FUT LA BELLE HEAULMIÈRE)



Of all Rodin's contemporaries this man was the one he respected most, and he sorrowed that genius should so seldom be recognized until the end of its career. He did a bust of Chavannes, but Puvis did not like it. His own touch was much more delicate. He thought he had been caricatured, and said so frankly. Having put his best into the work, Rodin was bitterly disappointed by his subject's opinion.

Roger Marx, the art critic who had helped Rodin get his order for Claude Lorrain, induced the French Government to buy Chavanne's *Poor Fisherman* for the Luxembourg. Rodin told him, "I have seen Puvis de Chavannes; he called at the studio, joyous as a child to see my studies, which pleased me I can't tell you how much. But I don't think he would have chosen as well as you, as regards his own exhibition, wishing, as he did, a museum canvas which has no meaning, whereas the *Poor Fisherman* is his very soul."

Of Marx himself Rodin did a bust, and the sittings were entertaining, for the men had much to discuss in common. The critic had made a fine collection of Sèvres pottery, including some of Rodin's vases, and had written a monograph on the

subject. Looking at Rodin's engravings, he said, "Only a sculptor unique in his profession could have produced them. Rodin wields his point as if it were a chisel, and attacks the copper as if it were Carrara marble."

Bazire, who seemed to be able to arrange a meeting with anyone, had become secretary of the communistic paper *l'Intransigeant*, and he introduced his editor, who was one of the enfants terribles of his age.

Henri, Marquis de Rochefort presents a puzzling personality. He was an impetuous and fearless leader in journalism, but whether his ardent activities were the result of earnest belief or mere greed for sensationalism is hard to decide. In those days it was not customary for the scions of noble houses to turn revolutionary, and if Rochefort suffered from an overwhelming desire for notoriety he must have been satisfied. His contemporaries were horrified—they themselves refused to serve the Republic except in the Army. Considering he had gone back on his class, they comforted themselves with acid comment. His "cynical mouth" was enough to arouse suspicion, and as for that "high

bulging forehead," it suggested more than mere lack of balance! French aristocrats in the Eighties did not go around "debunking." We have since grown accustomed to and so sanctified that sport. It shocks us no more than free love, or any other form of idealism. Socialism has even proved a popular hobby for sentimental countesses. But fifty years ago it was different, for over a third of Europe lay snow-clad and golden-domed beneath the Czar of all the Russias. The German Empire was consolidating a terrific military power, Spain was a kingdom, and 1914-1918 were meaningless dates in a future century.

The busy politician consented to pose (feeling, no doubt, that the bust of so exciting a figure was due to posterity). As might be expected from his exploits, he had the appearance of a naughty elf. A small pointed beard jutted angrily from his chin, and a noble brow furrowed by disconcerting thoughts was jauntily topped by a crest of ungovernable hair. Rodin, who had as much notion of politics as a dog of butcher's bills, found his vivacity delightful and his features akin to the Roman Caesar's. The enchantment was only dispelled



when he discovered that Rochefort shared the peculiarity of Bazire's friends, and could not keep still.

Rodin was slow, and the sittings began to drag. Rochefort gave drastic accounts to the outside world of what he was made to suffer in the studio. "I go to M. Rodin in the morning, and with infinite pains the sculptor at last decides to place 'une toute petite boulette' somewhere on the face of my bust. I return in the afternoon, and with the same infinite pains M. Rodin at last decides to remove the very same pellet! And so it goes on and on!"

Rodin did not rely on momentary inspiration; he coldly determined that his works should be the outcome of deliberation, not of chance, and he could now afford to laugh at his model's impatience.

The exaltation that did come to him after hours of concentration was more intellectual than emotional. It did not clog his thinking power, rather it set the wheels of his brain into a white, rhythmic motion, cold and clear as ice.

"Inspired moments," he said, "by inducing a condition akin to intoxication may cause the artist

to forget the very principles on which the adequate interpretation of his idea most certainly depends." The fire of inspiration came to Rodin, not from heaven, but from the sweet, passionate earth.

When the bust had been finished for some time Rochefort grew impressed by the number of prominent people he heard sing its praises, and decided that it must have been greatly altered since he had posed.

"Ah, you've retouched it a lot, I see," he would remark sagely. Rodin smiled in his vague way. He had not altered a single stroke!

In 1889 the Great Exhibition brought crowds to Paris and gave Rodin the chance of showing a representative collection of work. In the George Petit Gallery he exhibited his three great monuments to Claude Lorrain, Bastien Lepage, and the citizens of Calais, as well as thirty-three other works.

*The Citizens of Calais* created a sensation; they were accused of being "sordid," presumably because they did not appear to relish the prospect of immediate death! Yet that was good publicity, and on the whole the show proved a success.

Artistic circles were then enlivened by an exciting dissertation. The Société had formed an International Committee for the purpose of giving honors to artists of different nationalities, with the result that rewards given to the French artists differed from those given by the ordinary Salon. A number of well-knowns were passed by for the sake of new men, and this was more than the Salon Committee would stand for. In tumult and indignation they proceeded to declassify the awards as far as their jurisdiction allowed. Rodin, Dalou, Meissonier, and Carolus Duran, who were on the International Committee, protested strongly. As they were not listened to in the resulting chaos, they seceded from the Society and gleefully formed a rival Salon called the Société Nationale des Beaux Arts. This new Society was intended to be freer and more open to the claims of talent.

Meissonier was first president, and Dalou was put in charge of the sculpture section. Such is the nature of men, that before long Dalou had some difference with Rodin, and the latter replaced him at this post. The reason for this quarrel they never explained, but Rodin said to Paul Gsell long afterward, when all bitterness must have passed:

"He [Dalou] would never have produced anything but masterpieces, if he had not had an ambitious weakness for an official position. He aspired to become the Le Brun of our Republic and the leader of all living artists, and he died before he succeeded. It is impossible to follow two careers at the same time. All the energy spent acquiring useful relationships and all the intelligence needed to play some false rôle, is lost to art. Intriguers are not fools; when an artist wants to compete with them, he must expend as much effort as they do, and no time is left for his work. If Dalou had stayed in his studio and worked properly, he would certainly have created something marvellous, and the position he wasted his strength fighting for might have been given to him anyhow."

"One cannot follow two careers." For Rodin there had never been an alternative. "Still," he continued, "Dalou's ambition was not entirely vain, for it was through his influence at the Hotel de Ville that, in spite of open hostility, Puvis de Chavannes got a command to decorate the staircase of the Prefet.

How wise was Laurens who, in a world of prej-

udice and misunderstanding, could remain in the Salon from which Rodin seceded and yet say of him in 1900 with calm impartiality, "He is of the race that walk alone, of those who are unceasingly attacked but whom nothing can hurt. His procession of bronze and marble creations will always suffice to defend him."

## *Suburban Interlude*

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Chacun pour soi dans ce desert d' egoisme  
qu' on appelle la vie.

STENDHAL

THE NINETIES strolled in to a last decorous romp. Gauguin, Van Gogh, and Verlaine danced the impish if tragic measure that was the new century's cradle song. But, in spite of occasional benefit performances to keep them alive, they were considered outcasts and rebels.

Rodin felt he had borne the oppression of town life long enough, and decided to give up his Paris flat. With the compliant Rose to do the tiresome work, he moved to a villa in the little village of Bellevue near Sèvres. It had once been occupied by Scribe, the dramatist of whom Henley had written: "The theory of Scribe is one of mere dexterity: his drama is a perpetual *chassé-croisé*

at the edge of a precipice, a dance of puppets among swords that might but will not cut, and eggs that might but will not break; to him a situation is a kind of tight-rope to be crossed with ever so much agility and an endless affectation of peril by all his characters in turn."

Rodin was certainly not influenced by the atmosphere of his predecessor. If his ghost ever returned to Villa Scribe, he must have been sorely disappointed to find a new inhabitant for whom life was anything but dainty.

There was peace in the hills where Rodin had walked, and although he could get to his studio in the Rue de l'Université in a short time, he was thankful for the green Bois de Boulogne which stretched protectingly between him and attacks, invitations, and unwanted visitors. At night the dim Seine slipped along her valley beneath. He saw her coming, starlit and virgin, flowing in loveliness to the arms of the mysterious city. Standing alone by his window Rodin watched, and remembered things half forgotten. He felt that the fifty years of his life had been well spent, and his heart gave thanks for the beauty it had known.

In the ceaseless revolution of his brain apart from strife and desire, he found another world of strange ideas. Beliefs came and went as he tried to search the mind of the centuries. Once he had thought that movement was the chief thing in sculpture. In his figures for *The Gates of Hell* he had tried to achieve perfection of movement. Gradually it came to him that there must be repose as well as life.

The strength of the Greeks lay in balance, the control of the spirit over the flesh. He realized that in every struggling creature, in the very swirl of emotion, there was a fundamental stillness. All things are linked in one great urge to reproduce. The tree drops seed, and the young sapling springs up to kill it. The wild creatures die rather than desert their cubs, the salmon leap, the eels travel thousands of miles from ditch and pond to spawn in the Caribbean Sea. All are notes in the tremendous symphony of reproduction. Yet man is stronger and braver than any creature of this earth; for he is the begetter of creative thought. His mind is torn and his heart grows desolate, while he struggles through the desert of wisdom towards



an unobtainable peace. In this mood Rodin modeled the work called *The Thinker*. Its name caused much derision among people who could not understand that the body is woven to the soul's desire.

In spite of trouble over his monuments, his change of residence was followed by bouts of terrific productiveness. Long country rambles gave him inspiration that he could not find in the streets, and the friends he really wanted to see came to Bellevue. There is a piquant entry in Ernest de Goncourt's diary describing a walk with Rodin before dinner. The Master was completely absorbed by some Javanese girls he had been sketching, and could talk of little else except an oriental village he had seen transplanted in London. Adoring the human form, the sculptor followed all dancing with interest, and he was keen to draw the movements of the amazing little Javanese women. De Goncourt solemnly recorded every opinion. "He finds our dances too jerky, too much of a hop, while these dances are a succession of movements engendering and producing a serpent-like undulation."

Whenever it was possible to get away to real

wilderness with some friend he did so. Apart from visiting his beloved Cathedrals, of which he wrote "the Cathedrals of France are born of the spirit of France," he went off to Brittany with Fritz Thaülow the Norwegian artist, and to Normandy with Besnard. Never to stay anywhere very long, never to make plans in advance, and to carry no luggage, were his touring rules. It is small wonder that his companions on these excursions were fellow artists of equally vague temperament.

The Isles of Jersey and Guernsey were explored by two strange figures—Eugène Carrière, whose gentle eyes saw only a world of shadowy loveliness, and beside him a broad-shouldered man suffering from extreme absent-mindedness. None could have known that these two wrought with paint and stone as easily as they walked in the clouds. Even the little market town of Chatelet-en-Brie was alive with stories when Maître Rodin came to spend a few days with his friend the village doctor.

Rodin walked along the country roads scribbling notes as he went. Every pocket was crammed with bits of paper covered by such observations as:

"On a pale background of grey-blue silk the winter trees stretch their embroidery. They seem to be grieving! Yet it is spring."

"Sometimes the trees darken into a wood, sometimes they separate, and the light comes through. Whom is the sight for? For no one but one man who walks alone along his way. The road itself is beautified with veils."

"One minute the sun disappears from the way. But it returns, and I feel its breath upon my back. The road glitters and darkens according to the caprice of the clouds. It is a day of curious shadowy effects, shiningly silver, style Louis XIV."

"Now the sky is black, and the earth pale and blond. The sun smiles a strange white smile. The trees and the ivy tremble."

Rodin was at his best with farmers and peasants. There was nothing he could not discuss about pigs, cattle, and tillage.

In 1892 the monument to Claude Lorrain was finished, and Rodin's band of admirers stood him in good stead. In spite of the fact that M. Carnot, President of the Republic, attended the unveiling,

the good people of Nancy uttered a mighty screech of displeasure.

Rodin had not much social tact, and, feeling tired, he refused to dine with some of the bigwigs of the town. This did not improve matters. They revenged themselves by adding to the clamor. "We find this statue bad, and yet we are not animals." It was hard to argue against such a statement while remaining polite. Rodin was reproached, among other things, with leaving the horses' hind quarters in the clouds. The public was determined to have its money's worth, so he had to yield by freeing and completing the heavenly animals. The grumbling continued, unfortunately sincere.

The statue was about to be removed when up spoke two natives of the district, Roger Marx, who had been one of the judges, and Emile Gallée, who published a skilful defense in a local paper. People will listen to their own countrymen when all the reason of the outside world is vain. The arguments of these two bewitched or shamed the Nancians into silence, and such is the sheeplike tendency of human judgment that within a short

time they were trooping their children to the Pepiniere Park to gaze with proper pride at Claude the Lorrainian. Never did Rodin regret a meal less than the dinner he refused.

As soon as he returned to Paris, he sat down to write to Henley, whose charm and encouragement were always forthcoming. Henley understood the little things that sweeten life. "Since you made me live in bronze," was one of his phrases when referring to Rodin's bust, and when he moved to a new house in Chiswick he immediately let the sculptor know his work occupied the place of honor in the hall. How refreshing it was to turn to that great-hearted man. Rodin sat at his desk and wrote a letter whose sincerity penetrates through his stilted French style.

My dear Henley,

I am very happy to hear from you, and your note delighted me. Think of me sometimes like that, and send me some news about yourself, your beautiful daughter and Mme Henley. I am glad that in England I am not losing the small reputation I have already.

Yours,

Rodin.

Then, as usual, Rodin comforted himself by scribbling notes on the scenery around him.





THE CARYATID

PUVIS DE  
CHAVANNES



"It's a Claude Lorrain morning, with a wonderful depth.

"I breathe within myself that enchantment a spring morning brings. The cock heralds the day; the world seems to breathe an immense sigh. O marvel! Loving earth! Fresh and happy countryside! There is no exaggerated proportion. Things don't compete with man's scale. But he who frees his spirit from little things in this atmosphere, can dream of greatness and realize it."



## *Zola and Others*

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Le vrai et le faux, ce sont deux aspects du possible.

GUY DE POURTALÈS

THE BOOKS of Emile Zola now line nursery shelves and are more or less disregarded (except when a film version appears from Hollywood), but they used to be considered disgustingly improper, and when English papers called Rodin the "Zola of sculpture," insult was intended.

Curiously enough, it was through the influence of this author that Rodin obtained an order for a statue of Balzac. During the Eighties the Société des Gens de Lettres had collected thirty-six thousand francs and chosen Chapu to execute a monument to their greatest novelist. He died, leaving the work unfinished; however thirty thou-

sand francs of the subscription money remained.

Several of Rodin's friends were on the Committee and urged him to apply for the commission. He did so, and chiefly through the efforts of Zola, his offer was accepted by a vote of twelve to eight. It seemed his fate to inherit work from deceased sculptors. He was given 10,000 francs earnest money, and he promised to produce the statue in bronze, about three metres high, with a pedestal to match, within the space of eighteen months.

*Claude Lorrain* and *The Citizens of Calais* were finished, and Rodin was quite sincere when he set to work to complete his undertaking in the prescribed time. But like many artists he suffered from the unfortunate habit of gaily signing contracts and making surprising discoveries afterwards. First he decided that Chapu's rough model was unadaptable. He would have to make a fresh start. Then he realized that Balzac had been dead for forty years, and the only likenesses he had were David's bust, a small portrait by Boulanger, and some daguerreotype portraits.

Off he went to Touraine where the novelist had lived. Rodin tried frantically to reconstruct the existence he had passed there. He made inquiries

of all who had known him, and read his works through and through. It was vain; Balzac had described everyone in the world except himself. People were amused and startled by the search.

Rodin even had a suit of clothes of leonine proportions made by an old tailor who had occasionally fitted the author and kept the measurements. Most difficult of all was the task of discovering a man whose build would serve as a model. Individuals corresponding with Lamartine's description are not to be met every day of the week:

"It was the face of an elemental; big head, hair disheveled over his collar and cheeks, like a mane which the scissors never clipped; very obtuse; eye of flame; colossal body. He was big, thick, square at the base and shoulders, much of the ampleness of Mirabeau, but no heaviness. There was so much soul that it carried the body lightly; the weight seemed to give him force, not to take it away; his short arms gesticulated with ease." Rodin used as model a large, coarsely built peasant.

The further Rodin went with his investigations, the more he realized the huge task before him and the more determined he grew that his statue should be worthy of a man as original as he was great.

He made several busts, and at last decided to drape the figure in a dressing gown. As with all his work, he began by making models in the nude and built the gown piece by piece, but a satisfactory pose eluded him.

Soon, too soon, the eighteen months rolled by. Rodin discovered with amazement that it was December 1892, and unpleasant letters began to arrive from the Société des Gens de Lettres. They might have saved their ink. Six months slipped by, and still the statue was undelivered. Even Zola got annoyed, for the Committee was putting all the blame on his shoulders.

In a sudden, miserable panic Rodin found that he could not work at all. He turned to other things, and produced *Despair* and *Illusion*, and a *Caryatid* exhausted and borne down to earth by the weight on her shoulders. When the rage of the Committee had worn off, they grew desperate and pressed him at least to make a date. He spoke of the spring of 1895 when the statue would surely be ready.

Eighteen ninety-three crept on, and all that year Rodin suffered from lack of energy. Feeling utterly washed out and unable to throw off the de-

pression of suppressed influenza, he worked, but could execute nothing of importance.

M. Castaquay, when Director of the Beaux Arts, had seen the model of Paulo and Francesca intended for *The Gates of Hell*, and promised to get the State to buy the piece if executed separately. The new version was renamed *The Kiss*.

While Rodin complained of lack of energy and struggled unavailingly with the Balzac nightmare, he was amused to hear that an exhibition of his works at Chicago had created a storm. No gangster's exploits have since surpassed the scandal caused by the sight of a marble statue of a man and woman embracing. *The Kiss*, having been put into a private room, could be seen only by special request, and many a curious schoolgirl was dragged longingly past the sanctuary where only daring young men and lascivious ancients could penetrate. What if Chicago had seen the sketches that littered the sculptor's drawing tables, or heard *The Kiss* criticized by a famous artist in Paris! "But surely you can see it's merely two models posing?" complained Besnard, a sincere friend of Rodin's. "Those lovers have never slept together, and haven't the slightest wish to!"

After four years at Bellevue, Rodin moved for the last time. He settled near by in the Villa des Brillants, an unpretentious little red brick building in the style of Louis XIII, on the heights of Meudon and Val Fleuri. There was a vast studio drawing room tacked to the back and a lovely view from the front of the house overlooking a garden and the valley of the Seine. An avenue of chestnuts leading from the public road gave access to stables and back quarters. Guests were usually greeted by Rose in her apron.

Rodin, pleased as a child with his new home, wrote in his notebook:

"Meudon—the town is like a cluster of flowers; the trees, which seem to carry it in their branches, really sustain it, limit it, surround it. What happy houses! Not modern; I can see one behind the railway, one of the poorest: it looks like a temple. These houses in their green yards are like sheep in a meadow. These houses, in untroubled happiness."

"The countryside sleeps, overcome by that homely intoxication. A little wind; that fruit tree moves its head in the distance, the smoke rises, incense-like, from a tiny house.

"Nature, breathing, enlarges, deepens the setting.

"At intervals the rumbling of a train recalls the panorama of time across this eternity."

Among the first people who came to stay at Meudon was a young English artist named John Tweed. He had come to Paris to work in Falguière's studio, and met Rodin there. Rose had grown accustomed to the ways of her husband and his friends, and took it for granted that all artists traveled without luggage. Upon going up to bed on his first night, Tweed was amazed to find a strange nightshirt laid out for him with an old-fashioned nightcap!

A commission arrived from the Argentine Republic for a monument to their famous president Sarmiento. Mindful of previous experience with a committee across the Atlantic, Rodin was for once business-like enough to insist upon guarantees, and these were forwarded, together with photographs. To his delight, they added a request for a pedestal with an allegory, and in spite of the *Claude Lorrain* incident he could not resist starting to combine Hercules and Apollo in a figure of

naked beauty that no poor tailor-made president could stand up to. For who indeed would not rather build an altar to his imagination than to a politician?

In February 1894 Henley's only child died at the age of five and a half. She had been a delicious creature, described by Sir James Barrie as "a baby rose full blown in a night because her time was short." She it was who called him "Fwendy," and gave him the idea for Wendy in immortal Peter Pan. Rodin had never cared for his own child, yet it wrung his heart when Henley wrote:

"Dear and great friend . . . I believe my verses won't all perish. And yet what is the use of speaking about it? I am dead, my wife too is dead. We lost all in losing that marvel of life and wit . . . our daughter. You would have cared for her too. She had everything, everything." How like Fate to take Margaret and leave poor, unwanted Auguste! Henley who had written "I am the master of my Fate, I am the Captain of my Soul," was broken at last, and Rodin knew no words could comfort him.

In the following December, Robert Louis Stevenson died in far Samoa, and was buried as he



wished, on a mountain top, with the palms and the blue Pacific far beneath and the tropic stars above.

Rodin had little time for philosophizing. A flood of letters arrived from the Société des Gens de Lettres, and finally a fresh agreement was drawn up. He returned the 10,000 francs earnest money, and the time clause was eliminated. To their honor be it said that a disgusted minority resigned from the committee, knowing that with the expenses of his outlay Rodin could ill afford to part with such a sum. They did not approve of mercenary tactics. The undaunted sculptor gave a sigh of relief. Let them keep the money if he could have time in exchange.

The moment he found himself free to experiment, he entirely remodeled the statue, changing both the pose and the expression of the face. He was determined his best should go into this work, so different from anything he had done before, and he believed in his new idea. It would have to be good, for by now the "Histoire Balzac" was a joke with the journalists, and the people of Paris began to doubt if he earnestly intended to do the statue at all.

Without knowing it, he had wrought a great

change in the French studios. Franz Jourdain in speaking to de Goncourt remarked that the models were no longer allowed to pose in balanced and conventional attitudes. They all had to copy the "tormented and twisted Michelangelo figures of Rodin."

*The Citizens of Calais* created a sensation wherever exhibited; only in Chicago had it been overshadowed by *The Kiss*. The immediate result was that certain people in Calais convinced the Town Council of the unworthiness of the work. For a long time funds were at a standstill. Efforts to revive the enthusiasm of subscribers proved of no avail, and finally the Minister of the Interior was obliged to intervene.

In 1895, ten years after the commission had been entrusted to Rodin, a sum was scraped up so the statue could be cast in bronze. Yet more difficulties lay ahead, for when he tried to persuade the authorities to place the monument in the ancient market place, they would not listen, and insisted on the Place de la Poste. Then he begged that, if a high pedestal could not be afforded, the figures should be placed on the ground, but others thought they knew better, and in the end his work was

given a mediocre situation and shown to little advantage on a low pedestal.

Disappointed and weary, Rodin turned homewards to the quaint little villa that stood chastely above Val Fleuri. In the spring he knew how it got its name, for beneath him down to the Seine bank stretched a valley of flowers. In this lovely scene he comforted himself with lordly lectures to the many who were always ready to listen to the Master's wisdom.

He explained the aim of the Gothic carvers: "They fashioned a thing that had full meaning and produced real effects only when in its intended place. They carved for the architecture, not for themselves. Right up in the cornices they modeled figures in one way, and on the windows and arches in another; every piece of their work was exactly calculated to fit into the whole. This gave to their sculpture a more finely individual character with little or no personal mark. Nowadays," he remarked crossly, "nothing is wanted but gestures à la Marseillaise."

Evening came, and he turned to his notebook. "This landscape, now at the end of the day, spreads out voluptuously under a sky of incomparable bril-

liance; a Constantinople sky, clear blue with clouds scattered like roseate pennants."

It was a vexatious and melancholy man that de Goncourt met one day in the train. Run down and exhausted by work on hand, Rodin complained bitterly of the annoyance inflicted on modern artists by committees. Instead of being helped they were made to waste precious time by solicitations.

In 1896 he said to a journalist, "Today the bulk of the work is done. I have made a Balzac that pleases me. It would have been a better one had I been let alone. But as I have planted him on his feet, my conception of the great man is satisfactory. I have endeavored to put into a simple statue not only all my admiration, but that of others for the master writer. A few months are needed before submitting it to popular inspection. Within a year the subscribers shall have their wish if only I am granted the tranquillity so necessary to me."

Rodin was pleased, but the year turned into eighteen months, and the press jokes grew more satirical. The statue was an object of mirth before it had been seen, and the ready wit of the French nation is no gentle weapon.

Fritz Thaulow, the Norwegian artist with whom Rodin had wandered through Brittany, came to the studio in the rue de l'Université with Prince Eugene of Sweden, himself a clever painter. Rodin descended from the tumultuous land of his imagination to greet them charmingly. The prince asked him to contribute to a forthcoming Stockholm Exhibition. Rodin sent Dalou's bust and a plaster cast of the figure known as *The Muse* or *The Inner Voice*. At the close of the exhibition when the state purchases were being made, a proposal was brought forward to buy the Dalou bust. Most of the Swedish sculptors voted against the motion and it was rejected; whereupon the bust was acquired by the Christina Museum.

Knowing nothing of all this, Rodin wrote, offering to present the National Museum with *The Inner Voice*. To his surprise, the offer was insultingly refused. The King, greatly displeased when he heard of the behavior of his subjects, bought the statue himself, and Rodin found that he had been honored with the Commander's Cross of the Order of Vasa.

## CHAPTER XV

### *Balzac Displeases*

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What's gone and what's past help  
Should be past grief.

A WINTERS TALE

THE MONUMENT to Sarmiento was finished and dispatched in cartloads to its South American destination. Rodin began illustrating books for his friends. His first album of etchings was published by Messrs Goupil, and in the spring of 1898, when everyone had given up hope of the Balzac myth materializing, a huge plaster cast was packed up and carried out of his studio towards the Champs de Mars. It was accompanied by *The Kiss* in marble, a contrast Rodin found effective but which proved unfortunate to the rest of the world. To a journalist who was at the departure from the rue de l'Université, Rodin remarked apprehensively, "I hope I have succeeded; and yet, to be

quite frank, I must own that I would like to keep it still for a few months away from every eye. I should prefer to contemplate it every day for a while and wait until a sudden inspiration, such as occasionally flashes through my brain, came and enabled me to perfect my work, for even when achieved there is always the possibility of increasing its beauty." The moment the statue was exhibited he knew there had been reason in foreboding trouble.

From the public, from the critics, from many artists and above all from the Société des Gens de Lettres arose a howl of indignation. If during so many years Rodin had meant to play a practical joke, he certainly succeeded. Paris roared with laughter at his "snow man."

From morning till closing time the statue was surrounded by a gleeful crowd. The nearer they stood, the less form the statue had, and the funnier they found it. Only the subscribers failed to see humor in the situation.

The Austrian ambassadress, Countess Wolkenstein, had waited in anticipation to see this Balzac. She stood before the statue in silence. It meant nothing to her. The Countess, who had be-







METROPOLITAN

STUDY FOR A HEAD  
OF BALZAC



friended Wagner in his days of bitter struggle, turned to a friend and said, "When one realizes that a man is a great artist, and he creates something which we cannot understand, it does not necessarily imply that he is wrong, but that we ourselves are not sufficiently developed to grasp his meaning. We must take him on trust. It is not for us to judge what we cannot understand."

Soon after the Salon opened, the Société des Gens de Lettres called a meeting in which they refused to recognize Rodin's "rough model" as a statue of Balzac. In defiance of the 1894 agreement which bound them to receive the statue as delivered, they let him know that they were not prepared to accept or pay for it. There was no thought of discussing the matter with the sculptor, no account of his long toil and expenses. The president, Jean Aicard, resigned in disgust, but not many of Rodin's friends dared to stand by him this time.

Rodin could certainly have compelled payment, and his first impulse was to go to law; but on reflection he decided that, since they did not want his statue, he preferred not to take their money. Rodin tried to stand by calmly and think without

bitterness. It was a difficult situation, but, if he had survived *The Bronze Age* uproar, he would get through this. Unfortunately he was getting old. Sympathy and kindly messages could not assuage his disappointment. Many offers came from private collectors and public authorities who would gladly have bought the statue, but he refused them. His pride was hurt in a way no one understood, no one except perhaps poor Rose, who could say and do nothing. To a committee of friendly artists who wished to purchase it for some other site in Paris, he replied gratefully but with frigid dignity. They should not know that his spirit had been almost broken.

My Dear Friends,

The statue was ordered from me by the Société des Gens de Lettres for a site in Paris, which the Society had obtained from the Town Council. It is to such a destination that my statue is fitted in my thoughts. The monument is the logical outcome of my artistic career. I take the responsibility of it; and my desire is to remain in possession of it until the day when, as I have a right to hope, justice will be done to me. . . . Let me be content with this manifestation; and ask you to convey my sincerest thanks to those that have joined you, and at the same time my formal wish to remain sole possessor of my production.

Yours, my dear friends, with deep obligation,  
Rodin.

The Salon closed, and Rodin watched his creations being removed. When *The Kiss* was carried in front of *Balzac*, which he had left in the yard so as to get a good look at it in the open air, he suddenly felt the lovely marble group was tame beside the other. His pride leaped up, and he knew himself right, even though he were alone against the world.

To Camille Maclair, who wrote in the *Revue des Revues*, he said: "My modelings are alive, whatever may be said to the contrary, and they would be less so if I finished them more in appearance. Polishing and repolishing toes and locks of hair has no interest in my opinion, and would compromise the central idea, the grand lines, the soul of what I express. I have nothing more to say to the public on this matter. If they have no faith in me, I have no right to make the concession they demand." Rodin had very firm ideas on the subject of his duty to art.

*Balzac* returned to the studio where it had been created, and Rodin poured out his woe in a letter

to Henley, who had come to the end of his career as an editor, and was in a pessimistic mood himself.

My Dear Friend,

You have written me a letter which has deeply stirred our old friendship. We have both reached the same reflection; our lives are, in truth, somewhat similar; and I too have known suffering. Profound, unadulterated melancholy has fallen upon me. The struggle I must carry on wears me out; yet I am so proud that I cannot degrade myself, which would, however, be the only way to escape my embarrassments. What a sad time we live in!

Some believe in progress because there are telephones, steamers, etc.; but all that is only an improvement of the arm, the leg, the eye, the ear. Who shall improve the soul, which will soon disappear?

My dear friend, I do not know how I have managed to live. My reputation could be rendered so lucrative by anyone more business-like than I! Moreover, I find that the length of the struggle tells on me. How I wish that I had the childish spirit and fairy religion of other days to uphold me! My dear friend, I envy you still having your pen at the service of your thoughts. . . . I congratulate you on your book. We have the misfortunes that come with age; but for you there are compensations. Your younger contemporaries accept your advice and respect you, and that is no common thing. Goodbye my dear friend.

Affectionately yours,

Rodin.

P. S. And your friend Stevenson has also been lost on the way! Only his glorious name is left!

The letter of a tired and beaten man. . . yet in Paris he still carried his head high. The moment they knew he was not going to law, the Société des Gens de Lettres commissioned his old friend Falguière to execute a new monument. He had been a staunch admirer of Rodin since *The Bronze Age* days, and knew that Rodin had been brutally and insolently treated. The gallant little man showed his friendliness and sympathy in such a way that Rodin could not help being touched. In order to keep up good feelings, Rodin offered to do a bust of Falguière and Falguière returned the compliment.

"A regular little bull," Rodin used to call him, and that was a good description. He was thickset, brave, and obstinate, ready to charge at the slightest provocation. His *Balzac* was mediocre. Either he did not care about the result, or he did not dare to be anything but rigidly conventional. It was ready for the Salon next year, and was accepted in silence by the society, the public, and the critics. There was nothing to be remarked, either good or bad.

Weary of heart, Rodin went off to Holland to supervise an exhibition of his work. But when

alone in that drowsy land, peace returned to him. Once again he rambled over the countryside where the black and white cattle browsed by silver canals, and the flat distance was broken only by windmills praying with four arms to a moveless sky. Once again he studied Rembrandt, and in the still Dutch evenings grief was forgotten.

## *Universal Exhibition*

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The creation of a work of art, like the pro-  
creation of life, is a work of passion and love.

CARRIÈRE

THE OLD century was dying. Rodin slept blissfully as usual while the hands of the clock crept to midnight. Bells chimed, and with neat precision the nineteen-hundreds were born. In spite of worries and unhappiness, Rodin's output during the last decade had been prodigious. Yet he had scarcely any money, and felt that his art was still unrecognized. His name was known in Italy and Austria, Hungary, and Scandinavia, but only in artistic circles and chiefly on account of scandals. Count Kessler, the famous collector, championed his sculpture in Germany as Henley had done in England, and Mr. Yerkes in the United States had



started a collection of his works. Yet sixty seemed very old to a man who had been struggling since the age of fourteen. Now or never was the time to make a debut to the world, an unrepeatable gesture that would seal his reputation forever.

Another Universal Exhibition was in preparation, and Rodin conceived the idea of erecting a pavilion to shelter the important works of his career. During forty years they had been strewn all over the country. He would gather them together for this chance to be judged by thousands. Setting to work with enthusiasm, he then made the usual unfortunate discovery. Expenses would amount to about 80,000 francs. In view of the large crowds that were expected, there was every chance that the outlay would be covered by gate money, but he could not bear the risk alone, and had little idea how to raise such a sum.

The problem was solved by three Paris bankers, Messrs Kahn, Peytel, and Dorizon who offered to lend him 60,000 francs if he could supply the balance. Rodin, touched by their friendliness, suddenly turned shy, and did not dare to accept the offer. Charmed by such unusual delicacy, and seeing his embarrassment, they added, "Don't

bother about the repayment. If you do not succeed, which is impossible, you will owe us nothing."

He went off, happy as a child, to approach the Paris Municipal Council in regard to a temporary site. This was a more dismal job, for the Council showed open hostility to the whole idea. Rodin had rivals working against him in unsuspected ways, and artistic enterprise is seldom encouraged by the State, even as much as sports are, for instance. Eventually, his request was granted, and he secured a corner of the Place de l'Alma.

One hundred and seventy-one of his works, in bronze, marble, and plaster were collected from odd corners of the world. A special catalogue was prepared, and on June 1, 1900, the doors of the Pavilion Rodin were thrown open to the public. The entrance fee was one franc. Within a short time the outlay had been covered, and besides gaining the desired fame, Rodin blithely realized a commercial success.

In the catalogue were short prefaces by four friendly artists. Carrière awoke from the land of mists and dreams to say, "Rodin's art issues from the earth and returns to it"; Monet called him "a

man unique in these times and great among the greatest"; and Besnard exclaimed, "I imagine that Rodin's brain contains an idea of the whole world with all its forms, symbols, and their innumerable complexities." But these were artists who had known him before. Rodin's real triumph lay with the general public; for, wandering among his nymphs and satyrs and lovers, they were completely won over. *Balzac* stood there, of course, but, surrounded by a hundred and seventy works by the same hand, he provoked less laughter and more awe.

General opinion is a curious thing. Perhaps the people who gasped and gaped had no real sense of judgment and were simply overwhelmed by the variety of works they saw; but the artist could wander among them in his new top hat and know that his name was made throughout the world. Sheer talent failed to bring him the fame he deserved. He won by strategy and showmanship.

Among the crowd was the painter Martin, accompanied by a girl in her teens, named Marcelle Tirel. A dressmaker's daughter, she stood speechless with admiration at all she saw, and Martin smilingly warned her. "Rodin," he said, "has a

bad reputation as a man, but he is an incomparable artist, and one has to love him." The girl could not tear herself away from the marbles. Little did she dream she would one day be able to help the man from whose brain they had come.

Another admirer, who was also one of Rodin's future secretaries, diligently took note of all he saw. Mr. Anthony Ludovici, the earnest young son of a well-known artist, stood primly before *Celle qui fut Heaulmière* and confessed that it "shocked" him!

Isadora Duncan was in Paris at the time, and she often came to the Pavilion and wandered around entranced—a slim, bare-footed Terpsichore, with no sense of humor, but a great eye for beauty. She was always ready to wax indignant with the foolish. Strolling through this new world, it jarred her to hear such vulgar remarks as "Where is his head?" or "Where is her arm?" Round she would turn, and solemnly rate the whole crowd. "Don't you know," she cried, "that is not a thing in itself, but a symbol . . . a conception of the ideal life?" People fidgeted nervously. Her accent was unmistakably American. That explained it.

Rodin knew nothing of this ecstatic young disciple, but she could not forget his genius, and one day found her way to his studio in the rue de l'Université. "Psyche seeking the god Pan in his grotto," was how she fancied it. The man who greeted her she described as short, square, powerful, with close-cropped hair and a plentiful beard. He was amused by this ardent slip of a girl who knew her Greece as well as he did. With his usual simplicity, he showed his works. It was an enjoyment of which he never tired, for as he murmured their names, his great hands caressed them. She thought that beneath his fingers the marble seemed to flow like molten lead. Many of the figures were intended for *The Gates of Hell* and the *Tower of Labor*, two vast monuments which were never finished. Finally, he took a fistful of clay, and breathing hard so that the heat seemed to radiate from his whole body, he pressed it into the form of a woman's breast.

Isadora recounted that Carrière had seen her dance, and when she met the artist in his little house in Montmartre, he had proclaimed that she would revolutionize the world. Without a word, Rodin took her by the hand, hailed a cab, and

drove to her studio. She changed into her tunic and danced for him. With blazing eyes and lowered lids he watched the lovely purity of her movements, her white legs, her feet, that could express joy and pain. It was not often that kind Fate spread such temptation before him. When she stopped and began to explain her theory for a new dance, he did not listen, but, with the same passionate expression he had before his works, came towards her, and his hands ran over her limbs as if they were clay. The fire of his concentration scorched and melted her, and, according to her autobiography, her whole desire was to yield. But it was thus far and no farther. Suddenly the virgin grew frightened, shrank back, insisted on pulling her dress over her tunic, and sent him away in bewilderment. "Ah, ces Américaines. . . ."

When the exhibition closed, Rodin found that he could afford to have his pavilion transferred to Meudon, where it dwarfed the little red-brick villa, and served partly as a large studio and partly as a museum for his antiques. He needed extra space, in spite of the fact that he had bought an old house down in the valley to use as a store house

for plaster casts, pieces of Gothic sculpture, and innumerable sketches. The large drawingroom was also entirely filled with paintings and pieces of old Greek statuary.

In the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* there is an arch little article on Rodin, in which may be read:

"In 1900, the city of Paris, to do honour to Rodin, erected at its own expense a building close to one of the entrances to the Great Exhibition, in which almost all the works of the artist were to be seen."

Alas for humanity, if on such truths as these the tower of complacence is built!

## *Tellegen and Models*

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Where did I master sculpture? In the woods, looking at trees; on the roads, watching the structure of clouds; in the studio studying models, everywhere but in schools.

RODIN

“WHAT A marvelous knack!” he muttered, creeping steadily through the bushes. One of his ducks had seen a former brood destroyed by dogs, and now, by her mysterious absences, Rodin guessed that she was building a hidden nest outside the garden. At feeding time she would appear regularly, and then waddle to her unknown retreat for the rest of the day. No one could discover where she went. Rodin, consumed with curiosity, tried to follow her time and again, but she was guileful. The moment she suspected someone was on her track, she would go on an



apparently purposeless exploration of the whole property. At length, knowing he was hopelessly defeated by the little, innocent-eyed, gobbling actress, the sculptor had to leave her to her secret and turn back to his work. Baffled but unannoyed, he shook his head with wonder, and remarked "Quelle science merveilleuse!"

Lovely Nature, she was goddess of sculpture and ducks, and all things wise or foolish. No wonder he did not get on with Whistler, who wrote: "that Nature is always right is an assertion artistically as untrue as it is one whose truth is universally taken for granted. Nature is very rarely right, to such an extent even, that it might be said that Nature is usually wrong."

When people asked Rodin his opinion, he would extol Whistler's fine draftsmanship as frankly as he told his friend Renoir that he drew atrociously. Yet Whistler had the face to accuse him of obscenity! Rodin did not understand what the word meant. He was too innocent. To him all things were beautiful or moche. His pornographic Japanese prints were exquisite, and, as for the anatomical drawings that littered his tables, they represented what he saw. How could they be





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proper or improper? They were good or bad, that was all. With childish simplicity he showed them to an English society lady. When he saw her face change, he asked incredulously, "Are you shocked?" He could not understand why.

As for Whistler's gramophone, he could hardly control himself when speaking about it. For Rodin loved music, and whenever he visited the American, it seemed as if some raucous record was put on to annoy him. Actually, they had so little in common that Whistler ingeniously thought of it, as a method of relieving the tense atmosphere. If there was nothing to talk about, however, Rodin was accustomed to sit and think in silence. He scowled, and never to the end of his days forgot that "eternal gramophone."

Besides loathing mechanical inventions in general and tinned music in particular, the stolid Norman was as much shocked by Whistler's unkind wit as that artistic puritan was by Rodin's nude drawings. The current anecdotes of Whistler's brilliant repartees struck Rodin as being conceited and cruel. Whistler once gave a party for Rodin, and with whimsical peevishness turned all his pictures with their faces to the wall. They came of

different continents. Both were great artists, both had been refused by the Salon in the Sixties, but between them lay an ocean deeper than the Atlantic.

Rodin's work created a few more storms, which blew over. The *Sarmiento Monument* was much criticized in South America, and there were indignant outbursts when he held exhibitions in Venice and Rome. Amusingly enough, the Italian critics accused him of exaggerated proportions and lack of finish, attributes which were the chief and intentional characteristics of Michelangelo.

Constant Meunier, the famous painter and sculptor, was an old friend of Rodin. They had known each other since student days. Maeterlinck wrote of them: "In our day, Rodin and Meunier, the one in the realm of passion, the other in the field of labor, are the sole sculptors who have succeeded in seizing a few of the significant movements, these sublime moments!"

At an advanced age Meunier gave up painting to start sculpturing coal miners. He felt that he could not express them in color. Bronze was the only medium. One day a young man whom he

had used as a model in Brussels arrived at Rodin's studio with a letter of introduction. The youth was tall, well-built, penniless, and of romantic extraction. It was Lou Tellegen, who had come to Paris to learn to act, while earning his bread by posing. After an eventful first night in the capital spent, first on a verminous bed, second, on a bench in the Boulevard Rochechouart and finally in a prison cell, he walked up fearlessly to knock at the door in the rue de l'Université. Rodin read Meunier's letter, and wished to see the bearer. Lou Tellegen walked in. He noticed nothing sumptuous about the place—three rooms with high ceilings and walls covered with a greyish white-wash. Innumerable plaster and marble figures stood on high pedestals. Tellegen came face to face with the Master. In his own words, "To me his satyr-like mask looked like the head of Pan. He stood with one hand resting on the stand of a clay figure he was working on. Without saying a word, he studied me. In his right hand was the letter which Constant Meunier had given me. I felt his piercing eyes running over me. Turning from me to resume his work, he uttered only one word in a matter-of-fact tone, "Undress."

While Tellegen stripped, Rodin continued working. At length the youth managed to attract his attention. The sculptor looked him up and down.

"Dress," he said in a voice devoid of expression, and, continuing his work, promptly forgot Tellegen's presence. At last he turned around. "Come back here at five o'clock, and bring your baggage with you."

That was all.

Young Tellegen hurried to the police station where he had left two suitcases. At five o'clock he returned to Rodin's studio.

"Come with me," said the sculptor. They took a fiacre to the Gare de Montparnasse and scrambled into a train. Rodin always traveled third-class like an ordinary workman. He read *l'Intransigeant*, the communistic newspaper run by his friend Henri Rochefort, and did not speak. Until they actually arrived at Meudon his companion could not imagine their destination. In silence they climbed the hill to Rodin's villa, to be enthusiastically greeted by a pack of dogs at the gate.

"Wait here," said Rodin on the threshold of his

home, and left Tellegen surprised that anyone could use so few words in so many hours. Later he was to spend days with the sculptor without hearing a monosyllable.

Rose appeared with a sweet smile. She explained charmingly that dinner would be ready in a few minutes, and, having shown Tellegen the bathroom, she vanished.

Tellegen wandered into the small, simple dining room. Rodin reappeared, and Rose waited on both men. Tellegen came to regard her as one of the really good, kind creatures of this earth, and Rodin treated her like a dog. He loved his dogs, however, and, fundamentally, he loved Rose deeply. As Tellegen remarks, "Perhaps if he had not been so coarse, his sculpture might not have been so virile."

After a silent meal, Rodin escorted his visitor into the garden. There he pointed out the small white house which stood near his museums, and announced: "You will live there. I will not need you tomorrow morning. Rest yourself well. Good night."

Tellegen approached his new abode. He found



a miniature sittingroom and bath. From the bedroom upstairs he could see the countryside of Meudon.

Night fell, and the young Hollander wandered about the garden. He watched the lights of Paris flickering like a net of diamonds flung across the dusky river. The dogs followed him, eager for investigation and fun. Tellegen peered through the museum windows into a world of mysterious bronze and marble figures who seemed to move in the shadows.

When the "model" appeared for breakfast next morning, Rodin had already left. Tellegen spent his day in the museum, talking to the two Italian molders in the workshop at the back of the villa.

At six in the evening he met Rodin at the station.

"Comment ça va?" the sculptor asked. Tellegen tried to start a conversation, but failed. They dined in utter silence, served by the gentle Rose.

Next day, Sunday, Rodin showed Tellegen a small studio at the far end of his property, where he kept most of his drawings. These Tellegen helped to frame and catalogue. Alone in the studio, Rodin at last became expansive. He asked Tellegen to recount his extraordinary adventures,

and they talked for hours. He was disgusted when the young man said he wanted to go on the stage, but encouraged his efforts to model.

"You will have all the time you want to develop your talent here. In my spare time I will give you the necessary instructions. I won't need you as a model for some time. So study hard, and put these theatrical ideas out of your head. The theatre means nothing, unless you can sing or dance."

Then he asked how much money Tellegen needed to send his mother each week, and agreed to give him that amount as wages. He enquired how much the youth had on his arrival in Paris.

"Three francs," answered Tellegen truthfully.

Rodin burst into laughter. It was the only time Tellegen ever heard him laugh during the months they spent together.

"I'll double those three francs for your weekly pocket money. Besides that, I will give you the wages to send your mother."

Tellegen thanked him effusively, but Rodin remained taciturn. He spoke seldom because his whole life lay in one direction. ~~He was a sculptor~~ and nothing but a sculptor. He needed clay,

peace, and women; otherwise he was entirely self-sufficient.

If the world had suddenly decided never to speak to Rodin again, he would scarcely have noticed. He saw contour, and contour only. Looking at a flower, it was not the color or the fragrance that struck him, but the loveliness of its form. One day the sculptor found Tellegen reading Nietzsche's *Also Sprach Zarathustra*. Not understanding German, he asked the youth to translate it for him, which Tellegen did, badly enough. Every evening Rodin came back, and asked to have more read. When *Zarathustra* was finished, he remained immersed in thought for a long time. Tellegen watched him, wondering what was coming. At length he spoke.

"What a subject to put into bronze!"

Henri Rochefort came to dinner occasionally, and his vivacious personality seemed to please the dignified old peasant. Rodin had no care for the outside world. If he liked an individual, well and good. If not, he ignored him.

Tellegen was soon busy exploring the glamorous and dangerous quarters of Paris. To his distress,

Rodin suddenly forbade him to go near the divine city.

"This place is good enough for you, and you have everything you require here. There is no need to wander around the streets of the town." When the Master spoke, he meant what he said. He himself had settled down to a regular, almost Spartan existence. He never had leisure. All his life he worked from morning till nightfall. When it was too dark to see, he went to bed. When dawn came, and birdsong trilled over the valleys, he arose.

The evening after Rodin had issued his commands, Tellegen grew thoughtful. He could not sleep. Finally he dressed, and began to roam about the garden. The lights of the forbidden city sparkled temptingly. The Master's window was in darkness. Within a few seconds the young model had climbed the iron gate and run down the hill. He found a milk-wagon on its way to Les Halles, hailed the driver, and thus proceeded nobly to Paris.

At sunrise he returned. Everyone was still asleep. For six months Tellegen used the same

tactics several nights a week. If Rodin suspected the escapades, he said nothing.

One night this new addition to the Rodin ménage got into trouble with some Apaches. He was himself an expert with the knife, and managed to escape the police, but next morning Rose was startled to see the handsome Lou with bandages on his face and hands. He attributed the cuts to his razor. Rose thought him a clumsy shaver. She might not have been so tender if she had known the truth! Rodin ignored his model's woebegone appearance, and ordered him to sort the plaster fragments of early studies which he kept in a little deserted house down the hill. He intended to build a pavilion for them.

Meanwhile Tellegen was studying sculpture. He worked hard at a statue of the son of Rodin's chief molder, and after about ten days the Master came to see. He was an amazing teacher. Picking up an implement, he started to reveal the figure's faults and correct them, with such a swift outpouring of technical terms that Tellegen was bewildered. Rodin hacked the clay, his hands moved rapidly and without hesitation. For half an hour he talked at lightning speed. Tellegen has

described his method of instructions. "I saw the man's energetic nature actually come to life. He was dynamic. Such fluent thoughts and instant execution were uncanny. Without looking at me, the whole volcanic emotion of his true nature showed itself.

"When he had finished, there was hardly anything left of my original figure. Of what remained, he destroyed the whole mass, and saying, 'Begin it over again,' he walked away."

After three months, Tellegen, being of a temperamental disposition, suffered a nervous breakdown over a love affair. Rose cared for him during ten days of fever. The young man resolved to tell Rodin about his broken heart, but la belle Camille had long been forgotten. Rodin stared at Tellegen unsympathetically, shrugged his vast shoulders, and remarked, "That may happen often in your life, but you will always get over it." He pointed to where the latest attempt in clay was wrapped in a wet cloth. "Work and forget," he said, and walked away.

An American painter happened to come to Meudon, and asked Tellegen if he would return to be his model in the United States. Tellegen

refused, and mentioned the episode to Rodin afterwards. The Master's eyes blazed, he fell into one of his real tempers, and the language he used might well have dumbfounded his departed guests.

When Tellegen tried to find out the reason for such wrath, he only shouted, "Shut up. You stay here and work for me!"

Apart from modeling, posing, and nocturnal adventures in Paris, Tellegen found time to study for the stage. One day Rodin surprised him in the museum, ardently declaiming the poetry of Victor Hugo before the effigy of that very man. Tellegen suddenly perceived the Master, standing like a statue among his statues. His dramatic efforts stopped abruptly, and he started to apologize. Rodin merely grumbled.

"Why all that nonsense? Haven't you something more important to do? I thought you had put all these crazy ideas out of your head long ago."

Tellegen decided it was time to thank Rodin for his hospitality and depart.

"When do you intend to leave?" the sculptor asked calmly.

"Tomorrow."

Nothing more was said. Next day Lou Tellegen went forth to follow his own strange life as professional pugilist, bull-fighter, and playwright, as well as sculptor and model, to wander through the wilds of Brazil, to be Sarah Bernhardt's leading man and finally to commit suicide.

His voice echoed no more at Meudon, nor did a tall youth clamber stealthily over the gates at dawn. He had understood the greatness of Rodin, and knew what Lemonnier meant when he wrote, "Rodin represents genius and life!"

He seemed to carry between his temples a vision of life infinitely prolonged. He knew the secret of man's evolutions, from animal mechanism to the most cultivated human gesture; from the peasant's hovel to the royal palace; from the bloody, barbaric sacrifices to the symbolism of the cathedrals. Rodin lived in the ages of art and life. He portrayed life's continuation and its eternal renewal. His work is orgiastic and religious. He moves through the ages in an orbit of genius, of heroism, of passion. The modern soul follows in his trail.

At Christmas Rodin sent cards to the people he



knew and liked. In 1901 he wrote to Henley, who, after seven years, still grieved for his daughter, "You know how one has to spend life far from one's friends, sweating as it were at the galleys and knowing too well that intruders are always ready to fill one's place. It refreshes me to write to you, and I hope that your health has recovered; it was undermined by the loss of your daughter. You were inconsolable, dear friend; but it is more than any man's strength can bear never to forget his misfortunes."

Next year Rodin went to Prague, and no artist had ever been received with more whole-hearted demonstrations. He also visited Brussels with Mlle Judith Cladel, and pointed out proudly all his work on the Palais des Academies that had been signed by Van Rasbourg.

In England a body of subscribers bought *St. John*, and presented it to the Victoria and Albert Museum. The banquet that followed at the Cafe Royal was presided over by George Wyndham, soldier, politician, man of letters, and the last Elizabethan to wrestle with the Irish question. Rodin came over, and was given an enthusiastic ovation. The art students of South Kensington

and the Slade unharnessed the horses of his carriage and drew it through the streets. The grand old man was delighted.

Once again Christmas came around, and Henley received an affectionate letter.

My Dearest Poet,

I always write to you with the feeling of a brother. You have been so generous and faithful to the friendship you bear me and your life is artistic and poetic; . . . everything in your home is pleasant to think about, as well as your very life, your energy and your admirable character. Accept my best wishes for yourself and Mme Henley. . . .

In the following year Rodin's rank in the Legion of Honor went up; he was made a Commander, and special numbers of art journals were devoted entirely to his work. In the eyes of the world his position was enviable.

Then some friends decided to organize a treat that he would enjoy. Besnard, Thaülow, Baffier, Mirbeau, the writer, and Bourdelle, a younger genius, knew his rural tastes and prepared a picnic party in the woods of Velizy, near Versailles. It was delicious. Bourdelle made a speech, Thaülow played the violin, and who should dance for them

but Isadora Duncan! She was in her element on the greensward and among so many artists. Having lived in a temple near Athens, she could tell Rodin about the beloved Greece that he had always longed to see. Two years in Germany and Hellas had changed her greatly. There had been a black-eyed Romeo in Budapest, and one spring dawn . . . but she tells the story in her own way in her own book. Let it suffice that Rodin's shrewd eye noted that the timorous nymph had been transformed into a wild and careless bacchante. Their friendship lasted many years.

In one of his letters to Bourdelle, Rodin explained the effect Michelangelo had on him. "It was Michelangelo who freed me from academical tendencies. By observing him I learned rules which were directly opposite to those which had been taught me."

In May 1903 Rodin returned to London for the special benefit of the art students, who gave him another banquet. He loved to be surrounded by high spirits and youth. Not one enjoyed it more than he.

On July 6, he wrote to Henley, not knowing it was the last time. " . . . From my heart to my



METROPOLITAN

LES AMOURS CONDUISANT LE MONDE (DRY





RODIN BY JOHN TWEED



faithful friend Henley. How well I remember your charming home and the sweetness of Mme Henley towards you. You have also your intellect, dear friend, which vitalizes you, and, through your poetry, England. To you, glorious thinker, your old friend who loves you. . . .”

A few days later Henley was dead. His bust went to the National Portrait Gallery, and, as a gift, Rodin sent a replica of it for his memorial in St. Pauls, which Henley had called “the piece of architecture the nearest to perfection these eyes of mine have seen.”

When the bust was unveiled in the Cathedral, George Wyndham made a speech and wrote a description of the ceremony in one of his many letters. “Reading Rodin in St. Pauls made my ‘knees chatter.’ . . . But I wanted to honor my dead friend, and succeeded, more or less, in being monumental without being sepulchral.

“‘The promise of wistful hills’ is Henley. It is beautiful. ‘Promise’ to Henley was never more than expectancy based on the goodness of the known past and unlimited possibility of the unknown future. He saw that the naked realities of life were good. Why, then, he asked, should not

the vague iridescent horizon enfold something better to be perhaps unfolded?"

Whistler died in the same year, and Rodin was elected President of the International Society of Sculptors, Painters, and Engravers in his stead. John Lavery and Albert Ludovici went to Paris to lay the suggestion before him. The sculptor was as excited as a little boy who has just won his first school prize.

On November 14, 1903, he wrote formal acceptance.

182 rue de l'Université.

To Mr. John Lavery,  
Vice-President of the International Society of  
Sculptors, Painters, and Engravers of London.

Mr. Vice-President,

I am very grateful for the honor you have paid me in offering to me the presidency of the International Society of Sculptors, Painters, and Engravers of London, and I beg of you to receive my acceptance.

In expressing to you the interest with which I will follow the movements of the society, I beg of you, Mr. Vice President, to receive the assurance of my feelings of highest consideration.

Auguste Rodin.

On December 12 he wrote again.

Mr. Vice President.

Dear Mr. Lavery,

As you foresaw, I cannot come to the annual conference on Tuesday 15th, which has been announced to me by the Secretary. I beg of you to excuse me before the gentlemen, and to rethank them for the honor they have done me in my election to president of the Society. Assure them as to the interest I take in its development. I will be in London for the opening of the Exhibition and I will be with you at the council dinner on Tuesday 12th.

Many thanks for having let me know so charmingly. I beg of you to receive, etc. etc.

Auguste Rodin.

In January he came to London for the Society's opening ceremony. Jacques Blanche, the painter, accompanied him. Rodin appeared at the station in a grand fur coat with an elegant white silk cravat. He always had a coiffeur to curl and perfume his beard and locks for the trip. In the train, he asked his friends to arrange his discourse, and handed them several incomprehensible pages, which they rewrote. Rodin always made a mess of his speeches and on one occasion he horrified the delegation of pompous gentlemen sent to meet him. Hardly had he descended from the train when he drew one of them aside and asked in a loud whisper, "Are there no gay establishments in London?"



A banquet was given in his honor at the Cafe Royal. Although he could be extraordinarily amusing and lucid, on these occasions Rodin did not show to advantage. He sat silently throughout the speeches, and when asked to reply, all he could do was to rise, fumble, and bow three times.

Rodin always insisted on staying at a hotel of dreadful repute in Jermyn Street. His friends were disconcerted at having to meet him at such a place, but he refused to change his custom.

Society ran after him here, as in Paris, and now that he was older, he took it quite calmly, going out to various functions in his grand new clothes and beaming on all who showed the slightest sign of intelligence. Beautiful Mrs. Charles Hunter often had him to dine. In her house, frequented by George Moore and Sargent, he met the most interesting people in London. He was the lion of the season. The smart set tramped to his exhibition at the New Gallery, and fashionable hostesses tried to lure him to their drawing rooms. Although he seldom spoke a word at meals it was the thing to have him present, and *the thing* to open an impressive conversation with, "As Rodin said to me. . . ."

In Mrs. Hunter's drawing room hung a picture of her three daughters painted by Rodin's old friend, Sargent. One evening Rodin sat down in front of it with a society belle, and for half an hour gazed at it with half-closed eyes. His sole conversation consisted of, "Yes . . . that's good . . . it's rounded . . . it's rounded," and his hands described slow circles in the air.

Mrs. Hunter took him to a house party near Virginia Water, where the other guests included Sargent and John Tweed. Their host, Ernest Beckett (later Lord Grimthorpe), a rich and zealous patron of art, maintained that Rodin was greater even than Michelangelo, an opinion which must have been gratifying to the sculptor, even though he knew it was untrue.

Rodin was often compared with Phidias and Michelangelo, and, in later days, with Epstein, who once called him "the last and the greatest of the academicians." Henri Gaudier, the brilliant young sculptor who was killed in the war, wrote of him in 1910: "We shall never see a greater sculptor than Rodin who exhausted himself in his efforts to outvie Phidias, and who did outvie him in his *Penseur*, which reaches heights he can never

surpass. Rodin is for France what Michelangelo was for Florence; he will have imitators, but never rivals."

Rodin had no real pupils, but Tweed was as devoted and talented a disciple as Bourdelle, and they had a delightful time roaming about the grounds and watching Sargent's very odd attempts to play golf. In the afternoon, one of the guests took Rodin for a drive through Windsor Park in an open victoria. He hated cars. They went to see George III on his copper horse. The lady told him that she thought the best statue in London was that of Charles I, who had his head cut off. Rodin looked flabbergasted, "What! They have beheaded a King in England? Not really!" Pas possible! He couldn't get over such an unkindly act occurring in this sleepy, misty land. On account of the heat, meals were served out of doors. Rodin's hands never stopped kneading his bread into pellets. It was a habit of his, with everything he touched. Those short, strong fingers, sensitive as a pianist's, could not be still.

After dinner, when the purple summer dusk had fallen over the lawns, Rodin was taken by a young guardsman to hear the nightingales. They wan-

dered through the lovely night, and Rodin grew silently ecstatic. The bird's voices carried his heart to the stars. Ah, what a country of song and shadows and great trees . . . beautiful, beautiful England!

On another occasion, Frank Harris and Claud Phillips, the famous art critic, were fellow visitors, and there were lengthy debates on art in all the ages. Mary Hunter sat for her bust, which was cut in marble. Rodin preferred women in marble and men in bronze.

Before he died, Henley had made arrangements for George Wyndham to sit for his bust. In the spring of 1904 Wyndham came to Paris. He was the vital type that Rodin liked, and this was among the best heads he did. Wyndham went to the Hotel d'Iéna for three days, and hated it so much that he moved on to Bellevue. From there in a letter dated May 24, he wrote to his sister a description of his sittings: "You may imagine how I delighted in Rodin for four or five solid hours a day. I stand for a quarter of an hour, and then talk for ten minutes. We have run over the whole Universe lightly, but deeply. His conversation is something like this:

“‘Beauty is everywhere—in the human body, the trees, the animals, the hills, in every part of the body—in age as well as youth. All is beautiful. All forms are part of one beauty. God made them to reflect light and contain shadow. If we speak of pictures, he expressed himself through these—in creating the earth—I don’t read Greek—the Greeks speak to me by their works. . . . Well, yes—see (let us take a little rest) . . . [showing one of his groups] . . . This is the Hand of God. Emerging from rock, chaos, clouds. It’s really got a sculptor’s thumb. It’s holding the soil and from it Adam and Eve are created. Woman is man’s crown. Life, energy—are all those ours? The doors? Yes, they’ll soon be finished. I’ve worked on them for twenty years, but I learned a lot during that time. First I looked for movement. Later I found that the Greeks found life in repose. That’s all that is needed. Wherever life goes on, sculpture is liked.’”

Wyndham found Rodin “a very great man, and the greatest dear.” He gave a charming description of Meudon. “This Bellevue is a French Richmond. We came to it, 20 minutes in a boat,

and up 100 yards in a funicular. We are on a height, amid tree-tops, in silence, with the forest of Meudon behind us. We drove in it before dinner, heard the cuckoo; smelt the damp woods, saw the sun set, and dined on a terrace as the stars came out. It is an ideal spot, 20 minutes from picture galleries, and any friend you want to see—such a difference—and two minutes' walk from a forest.”

Two days later Wyndham wrote, “I must just add to my letter that nightingales sing here all night. I listened to them at midnight and again at 2 a.m. this morning. It is much to be on a height amid tree-tops, with nightingales, six or seven, singing between you and the river below, and beyond the river, a deep violet gloom, picked out by the tearful lights of Paris. The nightingales are singing now—10.45—terrifically. I wonder what they thought of the Band which played Faust and Tristram among their trees till an hour ago?

“There are soft scarfs of cloud against the stars, and sapphire darkness overhead. The acacias are Japanese in blossom. The roses ramp up old stocks. The band—thank God—has gone to bed,

a dog is barking in Auteuil, over the river I hear the whistle and pantings of trains. And these nightingales go it—

“As Rodin says—it is curious that with all our Art, our sculpture, our painting, our theatres, we have done nothing so good as Nature. What an irony it is of the Aristophanes of Heaven that we labor, with our Imperialisms and our Nationalisms, our gold-mines and transits, our Education (may God forgive us!) to make more people who shall see, and be able to see, the beauty of the World. And yet all the time we destroy it.

“Here—for how long? for a year or two more the old road reaches in zig-zag up a forbidding ascent of cobble-stones to the forests as they were in the thirteenth century. The river flows 100 yards below. And beyond the dog barks, as when he guarded savages in their wattled forts. But further the trains pant and rumble and whistle and ‘tout Paris’ asserts itself in points of electric light.”

Such were the ruminations of the Chief Secretary for Ireland in the hamlet of Meudon, and twenty years later his forecasts prove correct, for though the cobbled streets remain, a new cement

bourgeois suburb is creeping up from the Seine. The nightingales are fled, the forest is going, and soon only the stars will remain as Rodin knew them.

The genius of Rodin, his perception of character and understanding of human force, was revealed in his studies of hands. "I have modeled 12,000 hands and smashed up 10,000," he said.

There were other affairs to attend to. Rodin wrote Lavery for advice about his duty as President of the Society.

July 12, 1904

My dear Lavery:

I have received from Mr. Walton, a member of the Council, a letter asking me to support a proposition he is going to make on the 15th. The proposition is as follows:

"A member of the Council who wishes to write in the press about the Society or its exhibitions must submit what he writes to the Council or to a special committee."

Do tell me what you think about it. For my part, I have no objection, but I should like to know your opinion.

A. Rodin.

A few days later he wrote again.



17th July 1904.

My dear Lavery,

Thank you for your answer. As soon as I received your letter I sent a telegram to the Society to back up the proposition of Mr. Walton. I hope that it got there in time. I agree with you entirely and thank you for letting me know.

M. Ludovici, to whom I put the same question in case you were away, speaks to me about a proposition to have a permanent member in Paris to arrange the exhibitions, and suggests Jacques Blanche. Mr. Blanche is away from Paris, so I am writing to let him know of the suggestion. If he accepts it, I think we will all agree on the subject.

Yours cordially, etc.

Auguste Rodin.

On July 19th Rodin wrote again:

My dear Lavery,

I have just received a letter from Jacques Blanche which says that he would be willing to accept the functions of a permanent delegate in Paris. He thinks that he can assure a good exhibition, and only asks to be shown the place where he can arrange things. He undertakes to send a variety of interesting things.

Yours very sincerely,

Auguste Rodin.

There were, of course, difficulties over an exhibition of foreign pictures in London. In the

following October Rodin was writing to Lavery frantically:

My Dear Friend,

I am sending by the same post my request for an appointment with the Minister of the Beaux Arts.

It is already a point gained that Lord Lansdowne has used his influence with the French authorities.

If you could at the same time induce the English ambassador in Paris to push forward the request, these two supports would help greatly.

Yours etc.,

Auguste Rodin.

On November 18 he wrote:

My dear Lavery,

Yesterday I saw Mr. Chaume, Minister of the Beaux Arts on the subject of Whistler's picture in the Luxembourg.

The minister, who had heard nothing from either the English ambassador or the Foreign secretary, replied that he would consult the regulations, which (as I told the Society several months ago) are opposed to lending the pictures of the State.

In brief, I was refused. All the same, the minister asked me to give him written details (which I have just done) and our only hope lies in the steps taken by Lord Lansdowne.

I have tried and failed.

We can but hope in Lord Lansdowne.

Yours etc.,

Auguste Rodin.

They won the battle. On January 13, 1905, Rodin wrote:

My dear Lavery,

By the same post I am sending the agreement signed by M. Sauter.

Thanks for your letter and the news of the Exhibition. Mr. Stirling has just written to announce a banquet on February 20th to celebrate the opening of Whistler Exhibition. I will be with you for the banquet.

Yours etc.,

Auguste Rodin.

On February 21, 1905, Rodin lunched with John Lavery and Sir Charles Darling. A great painter, a great sculptor, and a great judge!

Between intervals of being ushered around various art schools, Rodin often came to Lavery's famous studio in Cromwell Place where he admired the canvases. He posed for a portrait (see frontispiece) which, completed after a few sittings, was the best ever done of him.

Rodin always asked John Lavery to tell him what sort of replies he should make when toasted at various public functions—"So that I may think it over a little beforehand."

The sculptor's courteous manners never failed.

He was present at the opening of an exhibition at the New Gallery. There was a long speech in English of which he understood not one word except his own name. Each time it was mentioned he applauded and bowed graciously!

Faithful Rose, though impressed by the streams of famous men and grand ladies who came to Meudon for their portraits, kept herself entirely in the background, opening the door in her old apron and then slipping back to the cooking. Many of them thought she was just a servant, and so she was except that her only wages were an occasional smile from the man she loved. She seldom spoke to visitors, for she was uneasy save with her own class and feared terribly they might know she was not really married. To be accused of this wickedness was the thing she most dreaded. By now, she was a handsome old peasant woman, thick-waisted and coarsened by work.

After many years of desperate toil, Rodin had taken to the good things of life and grown definitely fond of the wenches. Having devoted herself entirely to one man, Rose was tortured by jealousy. What chance did she stand with the

girls in his studio? Not only did he keep a continual supply of professional models with the best limbs in France, but many of the women he met in the outside world who fancied their figures were only too willing to pose for him. As he came of virile stock and loved beauty with a passion stronger even than himself, there were often interludes of a romantic nature. Rose had grounds enough for suspicion. But love was only a prelude to work, for then, as Robert Browning expressed it, "body holds its noise and leaves soul free a little."

Rodin took a childish delight in deceiving his lady. One day a friend called on him in his studio, and, as he was being shown round, remarked on some landscape drawings on the walls. He did not recognize any of the places depicted, but in the corner of each scene a name was written. One was called *Jeanne*, another *Clara*, another *Annette*, and so on. Puzzled, he turned to Rodin and asked him, "Why on earth have these sketches got girls' names?" An expression of naughty glee spread over the Master's face. "Ah," he said, "if you'll keep a secret, I'll tell you," and he proceeded to point out that in each picture there was a woman



THE HAND OF

THE HAND OF TH

RODIN 1





THE CATHEDRAL



IN SECRET

cunningly traced among foliage, hills, and trees. They were his souvenirs of various models, in exceedingly indecorous attitudes.

His friend found the joke enchanting, and did not give it away. One is forced to wonder what eventually became of these ingenious sketches. Is their owner aware of their anatomical secrets, or do they grace some museum drawer?

Rodin knew how much a name can lend enchantment, and often let others christen his works. There was a piece of statuary in his studio consisting of two figures, a man kneeling before a woman with his hands behind his back. When a French deputy came with a party of friends and exclaimed, "Ah, l'éternelle idole," Rodin was struck by the idea, and adopted the remark as its name.

Autumn swept in, scarlet-cloaked and frosty-fingered. Rodin's existence had grown into placid routine, broken only by visits abroad. He had everything, yet a curious loneliness and restlessness came over him in the home.

One day a remarkable middle-aged woman entered his life, and was to exert an extraordinary influence upon him for the next seven years. She was of American origin, and her vivacious co-



quetry had a fatal effect on Rodin. By a twist of fate, the lady's unfortunate husband had bestowed on her one of the most illustrious names in France.

Proud of her place in high circles, Madame la Marquise de C—— also fancied herself as a patroness of art. Rodin was adored by French society, so she resolved to sacrifice herself on the altar of love for his sake; not inconspicuously, as Rose had done for many years, but so that the whole world might know it. She came more and more often to Meudon. At first even the ingenious sculptor was startled by her advances, but there are some things that men seldom refuse. Rodin lived a dream life of his own making. To him the stars of spring were in her bella-donnaed eyes, and he was too vague to notice wrinkles and dyed hair. Madame la Marquise was always at hand, and when she slipped forward to lay her head on his shoulder, he saw only a woman desiring love, and wistfully he drew her into his arms.

## *Recognition*

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The artist is the real plutocrat. He rides in an automobile. The public follows on a bus. How can it seem surprising that they follow from a long way behind.

JEAN COCTEAU

THE LONG fight for recognition was finished. Rodin was over sixty, but he had the world at his feet. From distant Australia came the request for work to put in a museum. The University of Jena conferred on him the degree of Doctor. From the University of Oxford he received the honorary degree of D.C.L. at the same time as General Booth of the Salvation Army! Such honors meant little to the sculptor. He only wanted his works to be understood. Yet, having the spirit of a child, he enjoyed the fruits of many years labor.

Life was a mountain which he had climbed to the summit. In his own words, "It is the sweet loveliness of toil that gives one first patience and energy, and then the calm enthusiasm of eternal youth. From there one can see and understand life, that delicious life which we denaturalize. We are surrounded by masterpieces of art and nature. Yet we do not understand them, we are blind in the midst of splendors."

Sert, the artist, was anxious for Rodin to see his pictures. He asked a friend to invite the sculptor, and one cold, winter night Rodin arrived. He came into the studio through a small door, muffled up in a great coat and clasping his umbrella as if afraid it might be snatched away. The walls were entirely covered with pictures. Sert dashed forward to explain them. Without removing his hat or saying a word, Rodin started to wander around the studio. Sert followed him, talking volubly. Rodin did not listen. Having made his inspection, he reached the small door and went silently out into the night, still clasping his umbrella. Sert collapsed, weeping, into a chair.

Rodin had not meant to be rude. He was the most courteous of mortals, but unbelievably ab-

sentminded. Finding nothing to interest him that evening, he simply decided to go home.

John Lavery had proved a great friend and assistant in regard to Rodin's presidency. In January 1906 Lavery was going to open an Exhibition in his stead. Rodin wrote a rough idea of the feelings he wanted Lavery to express for him.

"Beauty is not the exception, it is the rule. Beauty is as diverse as the fruits of the earth. In beauty alone we can reach happiness. The trend of modern art is away from idealism toward what is more human and more natural. It is also the work of the artist to discover beauty in strangeness and to give it to others.

"The power of the poet reveals our own souls. We must search after the old forgotten forms of this earth and give them new strength.

"When reading poetry, one feels the fire of genius in one's veins, and for one moment it is ours. The poet reveals to us the beauty of our own feelings. And the artist must, like him, have the power of showing the infinity of movement and form."

One day Lavery was walking around Rodin's studio. He paused to admire a bust of Jouffry,

the famous writer. Rodin did not hesitate an instant. Lifting the heavy bronze down from its pedestal, he placed it in the arms of his bewildered friend. John Lavery went away delighted. He returned the gift in kind. Rodin wrote:

23 March 1906.

Monsieur Lavery,

I do not know how to thank you for your picture. It is a little masterpiece. There is so much art in its discretion.

I am embarrassed at the praise you give me and I hope you realize how grateful I am.

Your devoted friend,

A. Rodin.

On another occasion he asked Lavery to choose one of his works, which he would have specially cast for him. Lavery was in Tangiers when he received a message, "Your bronze group (*Maiden Telling her Secret to Isis, or to Nature*) is ready. Where shall I send it?" Isis or Nature—what a curious mind! The work was also called *Age and Youth*. Rodin was as diverse over names as he was technically consistent.

At Meudon, as in Paris, Rodin employed a large staff to duplicate his work. Like most modern

sculptors, he modeled in clay, which eventually hardens and cracks. Plaster casts must be made, and then the work is reproduced in bronze or marble by technicians. Rodin gave only a few finishing touches to the tremendous output of his later years. He stood by, stroking his beard, and watched his workmen and pupils. Remembering his own arduous training he never let unmeticulous work pass him. A dozen times he would send an assistant back to a piece of work with the simple reprimand, "*Etudiez ça encore un peu.*" Orders for duplicates in various sizes and materials arrived from all over the world. Rodin was kept busy supervising his assistants, and, although he did not produce much new work (excepting busts of celebrities and millionaires), his sales were greater than ever. Letters arrived by every post from people anxious to sit for their portraits. He modeled sad-eyed Berthelot one year before the famous chemist died. Miss Eve Fairfax and blind Mr. Pulitzer were successful heads of different types.

Rodin took great care of his bronchitis, and whenever he had a slight cough, retired to bed. Jacques Blanche often saw him sitting up in a cotton nightcap with a red silk counterpane over

his large bed. Rose hovered anxiously in the background.

Madame Foa, a lady of extreme wealth and genteel connections, had the happy idea of decorating her villa at Evian with five hauts-reliefs by Rodin, which were exhibited at the Luxembourg Museum. It was the height of expensive culture.

Bernard Shaw came to pose at Meudon. Puck unrecognizingly met Puck. The Irishman stayed for several meals at the Villa des Brillants, and Rodin, who had never read a Shaw play, and would not have understood it if he had, was enchanted by the writer's noble features. "Une vraie tête de Christ!" Surely the oddest epithet ever flung at the Fabian rogue! Earnest Britishers tried in vain to point out the inaptitude of his description. Rodin was adamant, and insisted that Bernard Shaw had the most saint-like appearance he had ever seen.

A grand seigneur who impressed Rodin deeply was Lord Howard de Walden. It was the first time he had sculptured "un lord," and his sense of medieval tradition was pleased. They interested each other and had many talks. Rodin worked hard during a sitting. His power of concentration was amazing. The sweat poured off him, and he

was tired out long before the model. There was a strange animalism in Rodin, which showed in his sculpture. When he was intent, it stole into his face, until the man's expression seemed hardly human. Like many peasants and undomesticated animals, he had an indefinable natural dignity.

A few months later, the sculptor was being lionized in London. When he could stand the prattling hostesses no longer, he turned beseechingly to John Tweed, who whisked him to Audley End. Lord Howard de Walden was very glad to have him to stay, and once again he noted the simple Norman dignity and the courteous manners which seem inbred in people of the soil. Rodin was at ease in this old mansion. After a few hours he came off his perch as a grand maître and reverted to his natural habits of a peasant farmer. His host struck him as being "very much at ease." They talked about horses, sheep, pigs, and cattle, and held long discussions on crop-rotations and manures.

Rodin's leisure hours were spent happily in the stables and byres, or admiring a tame leopard that Howard de Walden had brought back from Africa. It was kept in a large cage, and the sculptor waxed



enthusiastic over its supple movements. In spite of this interest in animals, Rodin maintained that the human form was of unsurpassable loveliness, because it embodied thought. The rural side of his character did not appear except in the country. With farmers he talked of turnips, and with diletantes he talked of noble aspirations. According to those who met him, he was an expert on either subject. Lord Howard de Walden paid several visits to Meudon, but there Rodin always seemed on his dignity, trying to behave as he imagined a great artist should.

Carrière was dying. Rodin spent a great deal of time by his old friend's bedside, and did his best to arrange his wishes to the last. He wrote to John Lavery:

December 17, 1905.

My dear Lavery,

Carrière, who is ill and confined to his bed after a terrible operation, has asked to be shown at our exhibition.

He wants to send that beautiful canvas called *Tendresse*.

I do not know if it is too late now; but in any case please telegraph me yes or no, and tell me if there is still a place of honor for Carrière if he does expose.

I thank you deeply for all you have done for my friends.

Auguste Rodin.

Rodin feared and hated death. Seeing the immortal genius of Carrière torn from its mortal frame, he became rude and hysterical. Life was beautiful and joyous. The artist was the interpreter of life. Death was the enemy.

In London that year, King Edward granted Rodin the honor of an interview, but of what they talked has not been recorded.

*The Thinker* had been exhibited at the Salon in 1904, and soon after a fund was raised by public subscription to erect the work in front of the Pantheon. John Lavery helped greatly. In April 1906, the bronze not being ready, a painted plaster cast was put up temporarily.

Several months later, Rodin heard that an unknown enemy had relieved his jealousy by creeping out in the night and smashing the substitute to pieces with a hammer; but that type of exhibition no longer did serious harm. More annoying were petty attacks, such as that in the *Dictionnaire Larousse* describing this work as a "Plebeian Titan—

more like a Ugolin devouring his fist or a wrestler resting than an intellectual in his dream." The words are a revelation of the puny and morbid sickliness which intellectuals were expected to display.

One intensely hot morning in June, a young Britisher set out from Paris to take up his duties as secretary to Maître Rodin. With delight he embarked on one of the small steamers that meander haltingly along the Seine. Merriness and pride lay in the heart of this smartly clad youth, for he was none other than that Anthony Ludovici, who had been so awed at the Great Exhibition six years previously. Although he had watched Rodin during one of the Cafe Royal banquets (and deplored the beard that made it impossible to judge his physiognomy), he had never actually met the great sculptor, and at twelve noon he was due to appear and take up his post as business assistant in the Villa des Brillants.

With unfortunate lack of cunning, he left the boat at Bas Meudon. It was eleven-thirty, and all wise workmen were at their dejeuner; the quay seemed entirely deserted, and the country beyond

stretched sleepily under the midday sun. With some difficulty Mr. Ludovici managed to discover that his destination lay two miles away, and that there was no possibility of obtaining a conveyance. It was a dismal prospect, but did the Britisher falter? Was he overcome by the drowsy hour? Did he purchase a bottle of wine and retire to a shady nook to think out excuses? No; goaded by a righteous sense of duty, and anxious not to make a bad impression by turning up unpunctually, he started to walk. Alas for the blithe self-assurance of early morning! The road was "long, dusty and burning," and it led up hill! How he regretted the days frittered away in Paris when he might have been rehearsing this journey! Running and walking alternately, with desperate mutterings and Anglo-Saxon determination he panted on. In the sublime delicacy of his own words, "I was vexed at having to make exertions which, even if I had been clad in flannels, must necessarily have impaired the freshness both of my clothes and of my person." Sore of foot, and apoplectic of countenance, this paragon of manly virtue finally arrived at the Villa des Brillants only fifteen minutes late.

M. Rodin was in the garden with his two dogs Cap and Thérèse. He received Anthony with a kindly smile, and while a torrent of apologies was poured forth, he observed the young man shrewdly. At length, the sculptor pointed out that an elevated electric railway ran from Les Invalides to the edge of his property, but ventured no reproof. Ludovici did not feel his sufferings to have been in vain, for in the future visitors were supplied with a small sketch map.

Rose appeared, "a frowning, tragic little figure, clad in a light *négligé*." She displayed small interest in the new arrival, and seemed anxious only to hasten her lord to lunch before it was cold. Anthony followed them to the villa through a clamorous swarm of ducks, pigeons, and swans. The dining room was uncarpeted and bare except for a trestle table, twelve wooden chairs, and a picture by Falguière. Rodin had a taste for Spartan simplicity in his domicile which, according to Anthony, "for thorough discomfort and austerity would have startled the serenity out of a mendicant monk." All rooms were kept as empty as possible, so as not to interfere with the view outside, and there was not an arm chair in the house. "I do not

approve of half going to bed at all moments of the day; when I am tired I go to bed altogether," Rodin informed the puzzled Englishman. And sure enough, every night when there was no function to attend in Paris, the great sculptor went to bed at sundown.

Mr. Ludovici was quartered in a small white house in the garden, but he partook of all meals with the Rodins, and soon learnt how brilliant a conversationalist the Master could be, if not interrupted. When not indulging in a monologue, or exchanging views with a man of intelligence, he liked to remain silent, immersed in his own reflections. Rodin found himself excellent company, and seldom encouraged others to make polite conversation.

One afternoon when Anthony had been with Rodin about a week and was still full of zeal to do the right thing, he traveled to town with his master. During a lull, he ventured the bright observation that the Eiffel Tower, which had been to the left, now appeared on their right. Rodin did not deign to answer; unabashed, the young man repeated his comment. With a weary sigh, the sculptor turned away his head and, somewhat dis-

committed, Anthony had to resign himself to the rhythm of the wheels.

On another occasion, the secretary did not distinguish himself by averring that he had never heard of the existence of two individuals named *Lorrovardevaldant* and *Bernarre Chuv*. It was some time before he realized that Rodin was talking about Lord Howard de Walden and Bernard Shaw.

There was an enormous amount of correspondence to be dealt with, and Ludovici had to write about thirty letters a day. Two rooms were devoted entirely to boxes of old papers that Rodin could not bear to throw away. The sculptor was ridiculously generous by nature, but his secretary could not help being surprised at the care with which he responded to the thousands of begging letters. He presently learnt that wariness can beget charity. The old man was afraid of being assassinated by anyone he refused!

One day a mysterious box arrived from Greece. The studio boy, Joseph, was sent off to find a chisel with which to open it. Suddenly Rodin's face clouded. "Supposing it's a bomb to blow me up!" he cried. Rose and the maid of all work, who

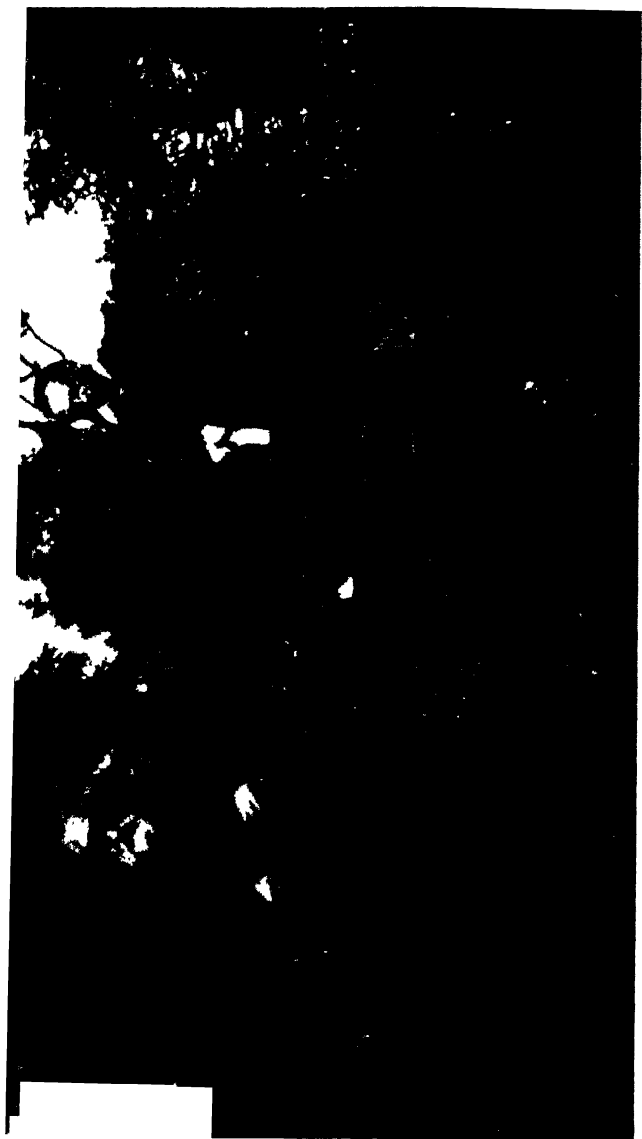


BERNARD SHAW



BUST OF RODIN  
BY PAUL PAULIN





RODIN AND JOHN TWEEED

were standing by, uttered sounds of alarm, and immediately entreated their hero to leave it alone. Rodin solemnly thought over the situation. "One never knows, women often have second sight in times of danger."

When Joseph returned with a screw driver, he was excitedly bidden to bury the tin in the farthest corner of the garden. Several days later, a letter arrived from a friend in Greece, announcing the dispatch of a tin of Hymettos honey to the man who loved and best understood the art of that country. Without the slightest feeling of foolishness, Rodin ordered the gift to be dug up and merrily eaten!

There was a Colonial Exhibition at Marseilles. King Sisowath of Cambodia brought over a suite and an extensive harem. On July 10 Rodin was invited to a special performance given in the Bois de Boulogne by seventy native dancers and musicians. Off he went, in his best clothes. Next morning, Rose and the secretary were regaled by glowing descriptions of the lovely Indo-Chinese dances, which had been directed by Princess Samphoudry, the King's eldest daughter.

At first Mr. Ludovici was startled at the vitality of Rodin and his lady, for Rose did all the housework with only one servant to help, and her swain seemed to have the endurance of a coal heaver and the spirits of a schoolboy.

The secretary was hardly surprised when the Cambodians returned to Marseilles, and Rodin in great excitement accompanied them, loaded with sketch books. He did a portrait of King Sisowath, and innumerable drawings of strange Eastern movements, whose exotic beauty enthralled him. After three days he reappeared at Meudon, so exhilarated that he could speak of nothing else. Rose grew weary of slim brown limbs, serpentine writhings, and snakelike eyes, for of such things the honest Norman dreamed all night and discoursed all day!

During the following months, Anthony had strange tasks to fulfil. Rose hated being disturbed by famous visitors, and was at a loss how to behave. On one occasion when the Colonial Minister was due to arrive, she made a special effort. To Rodin's horror, he saw his lady just before lunch, marching across the garden in a gown of scarlet satin. Clothes were the only subject on which

he dared not approach her! Poor Anthony was hastily summoned, and in terse whispers ordered to induce the proud Rose of 'Champagne to don more suitable garb. The embarrassed secretary found her arranging flowers on her dining table like any grand lady. It says much for his tact that, without hurting her feelings, he sent her off, puzzled but obedient, to fulfil her lord's wishes by changing into less conspicuous attire.

Anthony was thrilled by the celebrities who used to come for lunch, and his intelligent ears trembled with listening. Apart from an endless store of themes on art, Rodin seemed able to attack any subject with understanding and gusto. His power of concentration lent interest to cabbage-growing and foreign literature with equal ease. One day he surprisingly remarked that Tom Jones bored him. "Irony in the long run is tedious." The naughtiness of Fielding was not entertaining. Like Dr. Johnson and George Moore he preferred the ingenious humanity of Richardson to the treeless, flowerless world of a writer who "did not even recognize the magic in women." Of course, Rodin could read only French translations.

His political views sometimes startled. He

would leap from the defense of medieval monarchism to dilate on the hardships of the working classes. He never got used to the ugliness of the modern industrial world. Like a god on Mount Olympus he regarded life as perpetual melodrama, often tragic and generally spectacular, but never commonplace.

An amusing incident occurred when the sculptor was invited to inspect a coal mine. The time came to equip him, but no boots could be found large enough to encase the artistic foot. Down to regions whence Pluto has been driven, Rodin ventured in his own dainty shoon!

At Meudon the sculptor always arose early, and summer dawn found him wandering about the gardens in his old wool dressing gown. Interest in dietetics seems the inevitable accompaniment to artistic talent. Byron tried to live on soda water (with unfortunate results), and for a time Shelley would indulge in no fare save dried figs and bread from his pocket. Rodin's mania was comparatively mild. Having read Metchnikoff's theories, his breakfast henceforth consisted of a bowl of sour milk, and all his friends were urged to partake of this pastoral beverage.

Every morning a hairdresser would arrive from Val Fleuri to trim, wash, and perfume the Master's silvery head and beard. Vanity is often the handmaid of old age. At eight o'clock punctually Mr. Ludovici was expected to appear and attend to the opening and reading of the morning's letters. Rodin dictated his replies, and his secretary had to be speedy, for as soon as the hairdresser murmured "*Voilà, monsieur, c'est fini,*" all correspondence was forgotten, and Rodin trotted off to his vast studio. There he received visitors, and Mr. Ludovici was called only if an interpreter was needed, or if unexpected ladies arrived, when he had to summon Joseph and cover certain doubtful exhibits with dust-sheets. It was Rodin's effort to comply with mysterious American and British standards of Propriety.

At midday, lunch was served; plain, honest fare, with good wine accompanying it. The sculptor's favorite drinks were Claret, Burgundy, and Cointreau. He loathed fancy dishes. Having smoked half a small cigar, he went off to the rue de l'Université where he worked, talked, ate sweets and made love till evening. What more could a man desire? At about six he was back at Meudon,

signing letters and attending to business matters with Anthony, who appeared to be the first honest secretary he had employed.

Then dusk, and in the cool, sweet fall of night Rodin liked to be alone. With Cap trotting at his heels he would wander into the dew-touched garden. Away from material cares, away from clamorous women, away from the trite remarks of secretaries, he crept into the silence of his hillside garden. On one of the highest points he would sit, a great motionless figure, outlined against the early stars. Beneath him the Seine valley was lost in shadow. The lovely Seine had murmured his cradle song, and by her he would die. In the distance was Sèvres, and all his life seemed woven into the ethereal beauty of this hour. The sky darkened from blue to purple. The velvet hills were lost in mystery. He sat there, flooded with an inward peace, yet tortured by the eternal beauty of this earth. "At last I am alone," he dared to whisper. Cap came bounding back to lay his soft muzzle on the Master's knee.

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## *Horse and Carriage*

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When one is in love one always begins by deceiving oneself and ends by deceiving others. That is what the world calls a Romance.

OSCAR WILDE

THE ENGLISHMAN recognizes no master. Lords, yes, but to priests and artists a well-brought-up knee does not bend. It was, therefore, with a feeling of singular dignity that Mr. Anthony resolved not to address Rodin as did the rest of the world. Rose called him Auguste; to everyone else (including his son) he was Maître! Only his secretary considered it a duty persistently to address him as plain Monsieur. Considering how slightly Rodin's vanity was pricked and how greatly young Anthony's conscience was satisfied, it seems a pardonable offense.

That the sculptor suspected his secretary to be



capable of far more annoying habits was evident when he warned him against having anything to do with the models. Gravely he recounted the disaster that had befallen Eve and ended up, "*Now* you realize why I am so severe on the point. I have had my lesson."

It was impossible to live at Meudon for long without noticing a certain mysterious commotion which occurred every few weeks. On these occasions, the house was turned upside down, old clothes littered every room, and Rose was left in a state of exhausted excitement which she could ill conceal. Try as he might, Mr. Anthony never caught a glimpse of the person whose visits were the cause of such rumpus. That unfortunate individual was smuggled in and out of the house with the utmost secrecy but Ludovici soon learnt the story. Auguste Beuret, into whose angelic countenance Rodin had gazed so long ago and murmured, "I am well pleased it's a boy. I don't care about his character so long as he's an artist, a worker like me," was now a dour-faced man of forty. Circumstances had forced him to become a worker, but alas, he had not inherited his father's genius. It was dreadful to see what grimy life could do to

the chubby-faced child of Romance! Having failed to support himself as an engraver Auguste now eked out a living by selling old clothes!

Every few weeks this specimen of soured and inglorious manhood was permitted to creep into his parents' demesne to be presented with a small allowance and various undesired garments. Away he went, and how he spent the rest of his time none knew, and presumably none cared. Although often lamenting her lord's unfaithfulness and bad temper, Rose never seemed to resent his behavior toward their child. As for Rodin, he was not, as the reader may have grasped, a conventional man, but his one snobbery consisted in never mentioning and probably forgetting the fact that he had a son. When the Muses enter the front door, love is kicked out of the scullery window.

Until he was fifty Rodin had suffered what he called all the torments of poverty. Money came too late. He had no sense of value, and never learnt to regard it save with the vague, delighted awe of a child. If true artists are supposed to be impractical, Rodin surpassed the standard. The only thing due to lack of wherewithal that he

really resented was that he had not been able to travel as he wished. For fifty years he promised Rose one day to show her the world. As a rule, it was Madame la Marquise who accompanied him on excursions to cathedral towns. Once only he took Rose instead. They went to Laon and trouble began when Rodin insisted upon inscribing their names in the register as M. and Mme Durand. Rose thought that everyone in the hotel looked at her curiously. When she asked why noms de plume were necessary, Rodin was furious. She had to let herself be addressed as Mme Durand the whole time, and could not understand it. Her description of this little adventure was pathetic. "M. Rodin never came out of the church. He was there the whole time, writing in copy books. He forgot all his things which I had to look after and bring back." If that was seeing the world, Non, merci!

People were often puzzled by Rodin's habit of representing celebrities in the nude. In his studio, Victor Hugo and Balzac were revealed in a state in which one cannot believe they appeared in real life. An American lady once asked why the ancient poet (whom it is difficult to imagine save in a

morning coat and button boots) must confront posterity naked. Rodin answered tartly that his monument was intended for the eyes of other generations besides hers, and he had no wish to make Victor Hugo look foolish in the masculine costume of his day.

"But what about the medieval and Roman statues?" insisted the lady, who knew her history of art. "Their dress is universal in that it does not mar the beauty of the human body," stated Rodin with dignity, and the argument was closed.

All his life Rodin believed in, loved, and defended youth. France was suffering from worship of age. "In 1870," he said, "we sent old men to fight our battles, and the result was that the Germans beat us. War is the game of youth." Alas, so it has been bitterly proved!

Rodin's collection of Greek antiques had become famous. He would run his fingers caressingly over each statue with that passionate admiration which some women feel when handling jewels. Rodin's blunt, dirty fingers were sensitive as the antennae of an insect. He molded his way to heaven with them. He was not so elevated,

however, that it did not fill him with glee to outwit a dealer who tried to sell him a fake.

Rose liked Mr. Anthony, and made him her confidant. Her chief worry, he discovered, was the fact that Rodin made her button his boots immediately after lunch, instead of before. The effort disturbed her digestion. Poor Rose—she had been born before the days of suffragettes! The secretary proved useful when she wanted to send a letter, because she could not write, and did not mind dictating her secrets to him. Once he grew embarrassed, so intimate were the details to be recorded.

Ill-omened was the day when Anthony suggested that Rodin might be better clad by an English tailor who lived near the Opera and reaped vast sums by dressing Frenchmen like Englishmen. The idea took Rodin's fancy; he could not resist running amok with suitings of moorland tweed and strangely cut morning coats. For many weeks the secretary regretted those hasty words. Even Rose did not appreciate her lord's new style of dressing.

When sentimentally inclined (which was nearly

every Thursday), Rodin found it necessary to lunch in town. On these occasions he always went to the Café de la Quai d'Orsay, where a good lunch was to be had for a few francs, and by his side the same elderly blossom was seen for nearly seven years. The waiters knew her type well. She was brightly painted and coyly dressed. Imagine their surprise when she arrogantly proclaimed herself to be a marquise. Rodin waxed indignant at the food, but he swallowed it for the sake of the afternoons that followed—mysterious afternoons that the respectable pen had better pass over.

Whatever suspicions Rose may have had, she dared not reveal them. She had to bear his wrathful complaints about the degeneration of modern cooking, when the sly old fellow returned in the evening. The good woman was more upset by the thought of the temptations in the studio, which was thronged with naked models, strolling like show animals in a menagerie. Like the Greeks, Rodin wanted his mind to be filled with the grace of the human form, and desired to see natural movements, not stiff poses. He worshipped the ripple of muscle, the power of line. The human

body was to him as the key board of a piano to a musician. He might be getting old, but how good it was to be alive in a world where beauty lay everywhere, in the hills at morning, in the valleys at eve, in churches and music, in man's mind and man's physique, and above all in women. *La femme . . . les femmes . . .* he had adored the abstract Venus in youth, and now he adored the reality . . . little gazelle-eyed creatures, easily obtained, easily forgotten, they came to pose, and stayed to love. Nothing appeals to the feminine sex like fame, and Rodin knew how to appreciate the fruits of his labor. *Le Maître* was well pleased. Poor Rose!

The evenings were generally quiet. Although Rodin would not confess it, he had grown slightly deaf. He preferred eating his eternal sweets in the garden to making conversation with lively people. Sometimes Mlle Judith Cladel came down and, like an accomplished young woman, played old-fashioned airs on the spinet. Rodin clasped his hands, closed his eyes, and listened with a smile of beatific virtue. For once, in a way, Rose could look on approvingly.

After much thought, Rodin concluded that a

horse and carriage would be fitting. The project was discussed at meals. Rose grew tremulous at the thought of such splendor. Her lord found long walks a strain, and wanted to take the air like a great man. He heard of an experienced coachman and a second-hand victoria. Anthony was ordered forthwith to go and buy a horse. For once, the secretary was overcome. Having explained that all dealers are rogues and that he was no judge of horse-flesh, he begged the Master to take expert advice. The help of a veterinary was finally procured, and a sound, well-mannered horse abode in the empty stables at Meudon. Rataplan, as he was christened, soon began to wear that gleeful expression which spreads itself over the whole head of a horse who is well cared-for and conscious of his own importance. A horse is the only creature who can smile backwards by means of his ears.

Every fine morning from about six-thirty till nine, Rodin took his faithful lady for a long country drive. She had not known such bliss since the days at Ixelles! The early sun beat down on her smart new bonnet, the hedges were glistening and sharp with the voices of brave November birds.



The old coachman cracked his whip to express some melody echoing in his cracked old heart, and Rataplan grew intoxicated with delight at the sound of his own hoofs along the frosty roads. As is the invariable custom of horses, he returned swifter than he went forth, drawn as by a magnet to an awaiting feed. Apart from these duties, Rataplan had only to pose occasionally, a tiresome job, to be sure, but he was unique as a model, and tried to be gracious.

After six months, Mr. Anthony departed. In his own words, "I found it impossible in the long run to maintain that attitude of unflinching sympathy, tolerance, and devotion which a man of Rodin's temperament and age at the time I joined him naturally expects from an assistant, and which he certainly did obtain from many of the woman friends that surrounded him." For a few weeks the affairs of the sculptor looked after themselves.

One day Rodin visited la Marquise at Versailles. She was at that time employing as dressmaker a certain Mme Tirel, the mother of little Marcelle who had stood enraptured in the Pavilion Rodin



METROPOLITAN

BROTHER AND SISTER



six years before. Fate (which, as may be remarked, arranges most things in this book) sent the girl to the house while Rodin was there. He noticed her. La Marquise related her history. He was intrigued, and wished to see her. Unabashed, the girl came in and presented herself.

"I have known you for a long time, Master; you are the artist who has most impressed me."

Rodin was more interested in the criticism of youth than in the sly opinions of his contemporaries. He made her sit down, questioned her about his work, and asked if she was really frank. Marcelle was either very clever or another little George Washington.

"I would have told you the opposite if I'd thought it," she replied. "I have never been taught to lie."

Rodin, enchanted, wanted to know about her position in life. She answered his questions admirably, while he watched her face with cunning, childish eyes.

"Will you pose for me?" he asked at last. "I'm never sure of all my models."

"No, Master. I've never posed, and certainly wouldn't do so for a man of your reputation."

La Marquise burst into laughter at this tart rejoinder. Rodin lifted a quizzical eyebrow, and then gave a hearty guffaw.

"Well, I've no secretary," he continued undaunted. "I must find some one who will tell me everything. You seem very intelligent, so, if you like, you can come to Meudon. I have a lot to do. Everything is chaos. Nobody listens to me, and I'm disobeyed and lied to all the time. Can you come tomorrow?"

She hesitated, then replied gracefully.

"With pleasure, Master. It's a great honor for me."

So a young girl came to Bedlam, and took up that strange secretaryship. The longer she knew Rodin, the more she loved him. He was a baby as regarded the ordinary things of life. Nothing touched him except his art. Marcelle looked after him, and liked to watch him work. The great man still seemed unsatisfied with himself and sensitive to the most simple compliments.

Pan still sat in the hillside garden while Rose washed the dishes, and over a pile of letters a nymph bent her head, while her fingers danced on the typewriter's unmelodious keys.

## *Madame la Marquise*

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Aimer et penser, c'est la veritable vie  
des esprits.

VOLTAIRE

IT WAS vespers. The organ's music filled every shadowy corner of Notre Dame. Through the brilliant east and west windows stole the light of early spring. Like two vast, incredible flowers were the windows, flowers that had lasted hundreds of years; flaming scarlet, molten gold, and rose on one side, a mystery of blue and mauve on the other. More strange, more exotic than any sunset was the effect of those small glass panes so carefully arranged by the hand of man.

A pale, stone madonna bowed her crowned head beyond barriers of lighted candles, the very madonna whose carved lips had perhaps smiled at Jeanne of Domremy.

An old man sat near by. His black felt hat lay on the chair beside him, his long, white beard was spread over his chest, and his eyes were closed. One or two people looked askance, especially when a smile floated over the ancient, beatific countenance. Rodin was in his own world!

Nearly every Sunday afternoon he came to the cathedral. "Gothic architecture, presupposing a crown, speaks to it in the great, simple language of masterpieces," he wrote.

Sixty years ago a shockheaded ragamuffin had played around Notre Dame. Later, a thin, shabby student boy had walked to and from his work, anxious, perplexed, hopeful.

After the service, Rodin wandered homeward by the eternal river. He noticed the chestnut blossoms and the evening sky, broken only by a silver crescent moon. The same happiness in life, the same curious feeling of some great thing near, filled his mind as long ago.

Walking along the quays, he meditated on the events of the past few weeks. An ultra-modern upstart, eager for publicity, had criticized the monument to Victor Hugo as being "music" not sculpture. The work reminded him of a Beetho-

ven sonata. "Nonsense," commented the master, but he felt vaguely flattered. Lady Warwick, a great English lady, was coming to sit for her bust. How beautiful it was at Versailles at this time of year! He pulled a slip of paper from his pocket. On it was written, "Four young girls come down the road, beside the spring tinted meadow—four living pictures of joy. They walk lightly in the light air, with no more thought than the trees and the flowers."

Rodin often dined out in the city, but he seldom attended social receptions, and would talk only to people who interested him. One evening he went out with Anatole France, Isadora Duncan, and Loïe Fuller, who was to play a hectic part in his life. They dined at a cafe along the Quai de Boulogne, and passers-by turned to look at the curious foursome, arguing on life and love and beauty far into the night.

Rodin was asked to design a monument to his old enemy Whistler, the man who had got on his nerves exceedingly. The monument was for London. Rodin executed a bust, with a Muse whispering inspiration into the painter's lively ear. There



is a description of this good lady (written in 1907) which it is impossible to resist quoting: "a female figure . . . still undraped, bowed, and with one leg raised as if preparing to quit the earth, suggests detachment from life's busy hum."

That was the last thing she appeared to suggest to the committee. There was a deal of trouble over the work. It was the last monument Rodin finished, and it was never erected.

Sometimes at Meudon he went over old days with Rose. He recalled Mlle Camille. "She was very lovely," he sighed, "and had a great deal of talent." Rose gasped with fury and jealousy, while her lord went calmly on with his reminiscences. "You were the one I loved most, for you are still here, Rose," he ended contritely. That was his only apology.

In the dusty attic rested a little clay statuette. Rose alone went to see it occasionally. It was the mother and child which he had given her after the baby was born. Wearily her old fingers stroked the little figure. What strange things life had brought since then!

Madame la Marquise was getting troublesome.

Rodin had not bargained for so much attention. She reproached him for the time she spent with him to the neglect of other invitations, and would wax incoherent over the dukes and marquises of her acquaintance.

"If the King of France returned to the throne," insisted this extraordinary woman, "I would have one of the highest places at court, and be the wit of France."

This was generally followed by a long discourse on her husband's family tree.

King Edward visited Meudon in 1908. He would have been pleased if he could have heard la Marquise alluding to him afterward as "my cousin" and "our great friend."

Apart from lineage, Madame's favorite topic was her relationship with Rodin. Blithely she would assure her friends that he owed his glory to her alone. "I am Rodin," was a favorite remark!

Unfortunately this self-appointed Muse had a derogatory influence on the sculptor. Although Rodin was shaved, dressed, shod, brushed, and combed by the fair lady, and she bore his wicked tempers without complaint, she prevented organized work.

The sculptor might be exasperated, but he was getting old and did not know how to get rid of her. He was too naïve to be indignant when she reproached him for monopolizing her friendship, saying that it ought to be devoted to people of higher rank.

When John Lavery came to Paris, Rodin lunched with him in a small restaurant near the Odeon, and on one occasion he brought Madame la Marquise.

As a last straw, Madame insisted upon Rodin buying a gramophone, yet the camel's back did not break! The records were mostly church music. One of Marcelle Tirel's numerous duties consisted in winding up the machine. Rodin sat on the divan and learnt to bear his pet aversion with patience. His great head was buried in his hands, his eyes closed. He began to like it. Sometimes the old man even trembled, and the sentimental finger of the marquise would slip into the great rough hand that strove to mold infinity in clay.

After the religious songs, came Caruso in *Tosca*, and then, as a grotesque finale, the bourrée Auvergnate. At this juncture Madame la Marquise draped herself in a shawl of black and green silk. Up and down the room she pranced, kicking the

noble legs in every direction. Rodin promptly retired to a corner with the note book to inscribe his thoughts. Madame's capers sometimes lasted until the record had been played ten times. Marcelle dismally turned the handle, inserted new needles, and watched with amazement a strange interpretation of the traditional dance of Auvergne. The room seemed full of flying scarfs and ballooning skirts.

Meanwhile Rodin scribbled in his corner, muttering about Minerva and the gods. When a sheet of paper was covered, he threw it on the ground, and Marcelle would slip from her post by the gramophone, pick it up, and transcribe. "O my country, I love you because I love your flowers, your animals, your centuries of glory. Will you perish?" etc. etc.

When wearied by the record, Rodin went to dream alone in the garden. Madame stopped dancing, and began to make up her face. The years do not keep a beauty shop.

Having finished with powder and paint, she slipped between the open doors of an old Norman cupboard where she kept her drink. With energy restored, she returned to the gramophone, and

while some early American jazz blared forth, she continued dancing, whistling, and humming. "The clouds are troubled," Rodin scribbled in the garden, "the sky glitters with a radiancy that grows brighter, too bright. It is a storm. It has to be, that distress far above so that the good rain can fall on the fields. One must also suffer so that the thought of the spirit may spread."

The sculptor Despiau was frequently present at the gramophone concerts, but the marquise took a dislike to him. When Despiau called, she would say to Rodin, "No, cheri, you are not in to that bore," and Despiau was sent away.

One day "Carmen" came to the studio. Lovely, black-eyed Emma Calvé delighted Rodin with her Spanish charms and ways. The most temperamental soprano in Europe leaped up before the old man, and danced the real bourrée. Enthralled, he would not let her stop.

In the year 1731, an adventurer of taste and intelligence named Peyrenc de Moras moved his family into the house which his wits enabled him to have built. He died a few months later in "the most superb house in Paris." His widow preferred

a country chateau where she could live in peace with her lover, le comte de la Roche-Corbon. She sold the town house to the vivacious old duchesse du Maine, who ended her days there.

The next occupants were the duke and duchess de Biron. The duke was a grand seigneur of a type now extinct. He was a distinguished soldier and at the same time a connoisseur of art, literature, gardens, and all things which make life worth living. Back from the wars, he remade the park, planted tulips, built a fountain, and generally enjoyed himself. The future Emperor Paul of Russia visited Paris incognito with his wife. He came to the Hotel Biron, and we are told that, among other things, he greatly admired "the arcades, grottos, domes, and Chinese pavilions." Monsieur le duc had been evidently busy! "I liked the Marechal Biron," quoth Mme de Genlis in her *Memoires*, "not only because he never stopped sending me figs and nectarines (the first we had in Paris), but because whenever I listened to him I learned something."

The Marechal died just in time to avoid the Revolution. He was succeeded by his nephew, the famous duc de Lauzun, who was guillotined.

During the Terror, the Hotel Biron, as it continued to be called, was occupied by troops. Under the Empire, it became the residence of Cardinal Caprara, and then of the Russian ambassador Prince Kourakine.

In 1820 the lovely mansion was suddenly transformed into a convent, and every possible mutilation was effected. Yet thirty years later, the mother-superior wrote to a friend, "Alas! We have not been able to do away with all its beauties." When the holy ladies departed, in 1904, they took with them the exquisite iron work which had decorated the stairway and the balcony for 200 years, and cut down the best trees in the garden.

Once again the Hotel Biron was in the hands of the State. For a time the princely rooms were let to a curious assortment of people (Isadora Duncan among them).

Rodin came to the rue Varenne, and was enchanted by the unkept garden which had grown into a wilderness. He rented the best part of the ground floor, and ultimately occupied the whole beautiful old mansion. In the gracious, high-ceilinged rooms where rustling ladies once received their lovers in brocade and velvet, and where the

nuns had clinked their beads and slept on boards, Rodin found work delightful. Here was spaciousness and grandeur, the majestic peace of other times he so often regretted. The perfectly proportioned staircase was a joy to mount.

Rodin gave up the studio in the rue de l'Université. He moved a number of antiques to this new haven, and gazed happily from the vast windows into his own town garden. In dignity, surrounded by trees and birds and 18th-century splendor, Maître Rodin decided to end his days!

Unfortunately, Rodin gazed out of the windows more than he worked. Clad in long white overalls, he paced his palace, and many people came to see him. One afternoon an English lady found him, covered with clay, in his lofty studio. Whistler's bust was still unfinished. "I am working at it; it *will* be done in time. I cannot fix a date. People don't understand that I cannot work quickly, that I must work when I feel I *can*, and that often it happens that I must turn from the work I have been engaged on to another, a different work, till I feel myself called back to the first. People don't understand this. But England shall have the bust.



And, oh! yes, certainly I hope to go over and set it up." It was the old story.

"It is always the English whom I meet in our cathedrals," he remarked pleasantly. The lady noticed that he had a wonderful smile; it lit up every feature. "His eyes in particular smile—grey eyes full of depth, set far apart." Their conversation turned to Ruskin and Whistler.

"Whistler's work is strong," said Rodin truthfully, "full of character and of pathos—a remarkable artist; au fond a little cynical, and that must be expressed in the bust, for it is there—in the man."

The lady had heard of Rodin as somewhat arrogant. She found only a "simple-mannered, affectionate, warm-hearted old gentleman, of whom humility and charity in judgment seemed the most striking characteristics." When she said, "You have created a great school; you have many disciples," he answered "No, no! I may have had an influence, I hope so, but I have been nothing more."

"I should die happy if I could accomplish a masterpiece of art first," continued the damsel. Rodin looked at her quizzically. "No, no! that would not make you happy, for you would still

doubt. One always doubts, always!" His face had fallen.

Some Turkish ladies who were "seeing Europe" paid the Master a visit. They peered about, venturing comments. Rodin, happening to feel conversational that evening, gave a long tirade, while his model rested.

"If only those who succeed had the courage to speak of their continual efforts, their struggles, and their suffering, what an encouraging lesson it would be for those who are fighting their way.

"The men at the top should say to the beginners 'At each corner there is suffering and fresh struggles. We who have conquered passed by that weary road, you can go no other way.'

"But when they have reached their destination, the successful men are silent. They who are fighting get exhausted, and know not that all who have won had to undergo the same experience."

Madame Hanako, the Japanese actress, was posing at Meudon when Rose suddenly entered with a purse full of 10-franc pieces. She put it into Rodin's hands.

"I give it to you, Auguste," she said, quietly.

He put the purse in his pocket without even a word of thanks. "It's my savings," continued the poor woman, "for when you have nothing. . . ."

He pulled the purse from his pocket.

"What could I do with so little?"

Rose burst into tears.

Marcelle Tirel came to the rescue.

"Oh Maître—how wicked you are! Poor Madame Rodin."

Madame Hanako stretched her limbs, and watched the interlude with amusement.

"Forgive me, my puss; when I work, you know I don't like to be disturbed," Rodin muttered, anxious to resume modeling. But Rose continued to chatter.

"I've always kept the first bag of sweets you gave me, and also the six Bohemian glasses you bought me forty-five years ago. They are my souvenirs."

"Ah! Let's see them, Rose."

She toddled off to fetch them, and when she returned, Rodin took her head in his clay-covered hands, and kissed her. "How long ago it seems," he said, and a minute later was lost in his work.



METROPOLITAN

MADAME HANAKO (DRAWING)



RODIN MUSEUM

CLEMENCEAU

Rodin was very interested in his studies of Mme Hanako. "She has no fat at all," he said. "Her muscles are clean-cut and prominent like those of a fox-terrier. She is so strong that she can stand for a long time on one leg with the other lifted at right angles straight in front of her. When like that, she looks as firm as a tree rooted in the ground. Her anatomy is quite different from that of Europeans, but it is very beautiful, and has extraordinary power."

At the same time, Rodin was working on a curious Dante-Baudelaire mask. Various well-known people asked for sittings. The Comtesse de Noailles, the famous poetess, was not at all satisfied with Rodin's interpretation of her. It takes a great deal to please a woman. Her displeasure made Rodin miserable and angry. When he calmed himself, he wrote to the lady expressing his regret. He naïvely added that, as her bust was among the works chosen by the Metropolitan Museum of New York (in which a Rodin gallery was being opened), would Madame la Comtesse allow him to catalogue it under the name of Minerva or Venus?

The following day Minerva or Venus arrived at

Biron and gave the Master a piece of her mind.

"I have no luck with women," sighed Rodin, "not even when they are poets. America has all my best busts," he added, "those which have been scorned here."

The duc de Rohan and Clemenceau were among Rodin's last models. "The Tiger" inspired Rodin with unusual awe. Feeling that Clemenceau was laughing at him, he grew nervous, and could not work under those fierce eyes. "It's not me, it's a Japanese you've modeled, Rodin," snapped Clemenceau.

"I've never been successful with my busts," sighed the wretched artist. "Desbois thinks my *Dalou* is very good. I prefer *Victor Hugo*."

"And *Balzac*?" queried Marcelle.

"*Balzac*? Very few understood it. It is statuary, it is not a portrait. I've been told that Clemenceau has a collection of Japanese masks. He was furious to find a resemblance in my portrait. It seems that his wife urged him to refuse it. I think it must be so, for when women do not like me they are ferocious. All the same, my portrait gives the best idea of Clemenceau's character."

Rodin did a bust of Madame la Marquise. The sittings were not very regular, for some days Rodin thought her face looked tired, and other days he complained about her hair.

Madame la Marquise sat on the ground with her head between Rodin's knees. He modeled with his thumbs, feeling her face and then the clay immediately after. There were amorous interludes.

One morning Rodin arrived from Meudon soaked. Marcelle made him change at once. As she carried off his wet shirt, she noticed a cuff covered with writing. She copied it out. It was addressed to the marquise who had lately become a duchesse:

"In my evenings of study . . . in the nightfall of my life. . . . When I met you, it was as if a window had been opened over a garden. The delicious scented air filled my room. Life was lit for the evening as a candle. It was the approach of peace and the divine. This exaltation gave me the happiness I had lost. I was loved by the Queen of Grace. By that window my heart's blood turned to love. . . ."



When Rodin was installed in his armchair at the bottom of the park, the secretary went to find him.

"Who is the love letter on your cuff for, Master?"

"Let me see it." He was quick as lightning. Marcelle read the copy.

"I really don't remember," said Rodin naughtily, "it must be for my poor, old wife."

"Shall I give it to her from you, dear Master?" He asked to have it reread.

"It's too beautiful for her," he said, snatching the paper out of Marcelle's hand. "She wouldn't understand it."

That night Marcelle found the copy in the garden where he had dropped it.

Next day the "Queen of Grace" gave another dancing display. Because she had fortified herself with kirsch, however, she hiccupped with each leap. The dignity of the house was offended. Did the ghost of Voltaire mutter in a corner? Did the shade of Rose de Staël return to gasp with horror? Did noble dukes and long dead duchesses turn in their graves to the sound of a gramophone? And what would the nuns have thought?

Rodin solemnly began to take some notes.

"Several recoils . . . then proud advance . . . she puts the shield in front of her arm, the shield flies around her, the shawl follows. Intoxicating Euterpe! Shall I only do writhing forms? La Bourrée without a chest. . . . God forbid! . . . garland, buckler, lifted arm, shawl, Greek drapery. . . ." If Rodin was planning the statue he was going to make in heaven, God had reason to forbid it.

This was too much, even for the all-comprehending secretary. Charles Morice who was helping Rodin compile his book on the cathedrals of France was shocked when told of the pathetic scenes. "I know Rodin so well," he said. "That is not his most charming side, but perhaps it is necessary to his greatness. One cannot know, we have to take men as they are. Rodin and this foolishness are inseparable."

The duchess loved melodrama. She read of an "apache scare" in the newspapers, and was immediately in her element. Trembling at the very word "apache," she confided her fright to Rodin. Then she set off to the Prefect of Police, M. Lépine, to ask for a detective to accompany the Master.

An ex-policeman was employed to fetch Rodin every evening at six and accompany him from the Hotel Biron to Meudon. At night he kept watch near the Master's bedside. Hitherto Rodin had never thought of danger, but now he insisted on buying a police dog which was christened Dora. Loaded revolvers lay about the tables at Meudon and the Hotel Biron.

The "terror phase" did not last long. After a month Rodin grew tired of being guarded, and the firearms were put away with laughter.

One Sunday Marcelle Tirel brought two pretty young friends down to Meudon. They thought Rodin very handsome, and told him so.

"Ah! Mesdemoiselles," he replied laughingly, "if I had expected your visit, I would have dolled myself up. When my hair is curled I am much better looking."

"I would have known you were a great artist just by seeing you," said one young lady.

"The inner beauty shines through, does it?" asked the old man seriously.

The girl was dumbfounded.

Madame Dussane of the Théâtre Français came

to see Rodin at the Hotel Biron. Having admired his work, she recited to him. The Master, who liked acting, paid her many compliments while Madame la Duchesse pouted in a corner. When Madame Segond-Weber, the tragedienne, came to Biron, however, the duchess could not restrain herself:

"She is badly brought up, one feels her common origin," she cried. Rodin lost his temper.

"She is a great artist, greater than me in her role, and she is my friend."

Yet a quarter of an hour later he was swearing that the duchess was the most perfect of women, and that none could equal her. So it continued.

In 1910 Paul Gsell wrote a book of conversations with Rodin, which was called *L'Art*. When he returned the drawings which had been used to illustrate the volume, he found Rodin in a down-cast state of mind:

"Dear friend, Madame is there . . . very ill. . . . So you understand. . . ."

Gsell departed and Rodin rushed back to his lovely lady, who had arrived intoxicated that morning, and spread herself gracefully upon the

floor. Rodin had dashed to lift her to a sofa where she lay, plaintively bewailing her indisposition for the rest of the day.

Gsell met Rodin at the Salon. The Master was accompanied by two of his disciples, Bourdelle and Despiau. Bourdelle was exhibiting for the first time his great Hercules, and also an image of the god Pan, whom he had sculptured to resemble Rodin.

At midday the four men stepped into the green gayness of the Champs-Élysées.

"Where shall we lunch?" asked Bourdelle. "In the restaurants of this quarter one is generally served by waiters in dress clothes, which I cannot bear because they give me an inferiority complex. Let's find some good chauffeurs' restaurant."

"One certainly gets better food than in the grand places—and that is the secret thought of Bourdelle, who hides his greed behind a pretense of modesty," Despiau agreed.

They ended by going to a small pub near by.

"Serve yourself, Bourdelle," said Despiau, passing him a dish, "although you don't deserve to be nourished, as you are a mere artist and therefore useless."

"I forgive your impertinence," replied Bourdelle, "as I observe you taking half the dish yourself."

A discussion on how the world would get along without art followed. Rodin listened and then chimed in:

"Bourdelle doesn't mean one word he says. I believe that artists are the most useful of men."

Bourdelle laughed. "It's love of your profession that makes you blind!"

"Not at all. My judgment is based on very solid reasons, which I could explain."

"Maître, I should love to know them."

"Well, drink some of this Burgundy. It will put you in a better mood to hear me. First of all, have you never noticed that in modern society, the artists, I mean the real artists, are the only men who find any pleasure in their profession?"

"It's certain," cried Bourdelle with his mouth full, "that work is all our joy, all our life . . . but still. . . ."

"Wait! What our contemporaries most lack is love of their craft. They hate their jobs. It is the same in every class. The politicians see nothing in their functions but the material advantages

they can reap for themselves. The only idea in industry is how to make as much money as possible by turning out cheap productions. The workers hate their employers (often with reason), and hastily rush through their jobs. Nearly all men today seem to regard work as a frightful necessity, when it ought to be looked upon as the reason of life and happiness.

“It was not always so. Most of the furniture, materials, and utensils of olden times show the care with which they were made. How much happier humanity would be, if, instead of being the ransom of life, work was its aim.”

“Well argued,” said Despiau. “I was wrong, Bourdelle, I admit that you deserve to be nourished. Take some more asparagus, I beg of you.”

## *The Years Flow On*

---

Each day is a life.

RUNEBURG

**R**ODIN sometimes dined with the art-dealer Vollard in his famous "cellar." There he met his contemporary Maillol, whom he admired. In his recollection, Vollard gives an extraordinary account of a visit to Rodin.

At the doorway, the dealer heard a woman's voice:

"Master! Mercy for such a beautiful head. . . ."

Rodin, with a sword in his hand, opened the door. The floor behind him was scattered with fragments of statues. Several people, including Loïe Fuller, the dancer, and Bourdelle, Rodin's favorite pupil, looked on with consternation as at a naughty if adored child.



Vollard walked in puzzled, while Rodin innocently explained.

"I can't find what I want today, or rather too many titles occur to me at once. *Hope of the Morning, Starry Night, A Day Will Come*. . . . I must allow time for my thoughts to clear. It was in a nightmare that I hit on my best title, *The Kiss*. And again, the other day I was in my cellar when I gave a start. I had thought of *The Earth* to symbolize a woman in travail."

At that moment the hairdresser came in with his little bag, and enveloped the aged sculptor with a wrapper on which was pinned the rosette of a Commander of the Legion of Honour.

"Today," said Rodin seating himself before a mirror, "you are to shave off my beard."

Cries of horror issued from his satellites standing around.

The barber refused to obey.

"I was only joking," Rodin calmed them. "Ah! My beard! I pull it when inspiration is slow in coming. Besides, like most people, I am superstitious. They touch wood. I touch my beard."

A new arrival appeared. She was a Russian

from Siberia, who had been delegated by a group of political exiles to bring homage to the great sculptor. She carried a child who had been born on the way.

"Bless him, Master."

Rodin laid his hands on the strange visitor, while the barber snipped his locks.

After a hurried glance at his pupils and workers in the next room, Rodin picked up a severed head from the floor.

"How much more beautiful it is without the body," he exclaimed. "But you have to know how to cut them up. There's the secret."

"By what signs, Master, may one distinguish a false from a true Rodin?" asked an admirer.

"Only I can do so. It is quite simple! A true Rodin is one that has been cast with my consent; the false is done without my knowledge."

"Rodein! Le grand Rodein!" echoed Bourdelle in his Marseilles accent. It was his usual cry.

A footman appeared in rich livery, carrying a plant covered with glassine paper, with a visiting card pinned to a branch. Rodin unfastened it gleefully.

"Yet another present from the good Duchess!"

"Dwarf acacia, scentless. . . ." read Loïe Fuller from a label.

"What a marvelous thing science is! How fortunate to be born in a century in which one can command nature!"

The inevitable topic of ancient Greece arose.

"Alas!" cried Rodin. "We are not Greeks. We are civilized. Think of it! If I were to go merely to a reception by the Municipal Council, with my bare feet in sandals—in the costume, in fact, of a contemporary of Phidias—it would be no use my saying, 'I am Rodin.' I should be chucked out."

Gasps of indignation arose.

"Not to be the great Rodin any more," continued the Master. "To be twenty years old and to be loved for oneself."

"But it is for yourself that we love you, Master." Amid a chorus of admiring exclamations, Rodin suddenly began to model a head.

A gentleman solemnly asked the sculptor, "Illustrious friend, whence do you draw the life that palpitates in the least detail of your work?"

"From life itself. I make life out of life," the

old peasant replied, and continued to work, unruffled.

One morning a slim figure ran across the courtyard of the Hotel Biron, stumbled, and fell. Marcelle Tirel had hurt her leg. As she limped painfully in, the old man, who had been watching from a window, rushed out and caught her in his arms like a child. Paying no heed to remonstrances, he carried her to the drawing room sofa, and called a doctor.

"Above all you are a woman," he insisted, "and a woman is sacred. I owe everything to women. They are the walking masterpieces of this earth."

Rodin, always kind and tender to people who were ill, sent his secretary to bed if she had a headache.

On the morning of New Year's Day, Marcelle went to give some flowers to Rose at Meudon. She found the old woman alone with tears streaming down her cheeks. She told the secretary how many days of her life had been passed in solitude, "while Rodin gadded about and covered that devil Camille with flowers." She cried so much over Rodin's unfaithfulness, that Marcelle had to invent

a lie to calm her. "But Mlle is dead." Rose's tears ceased.

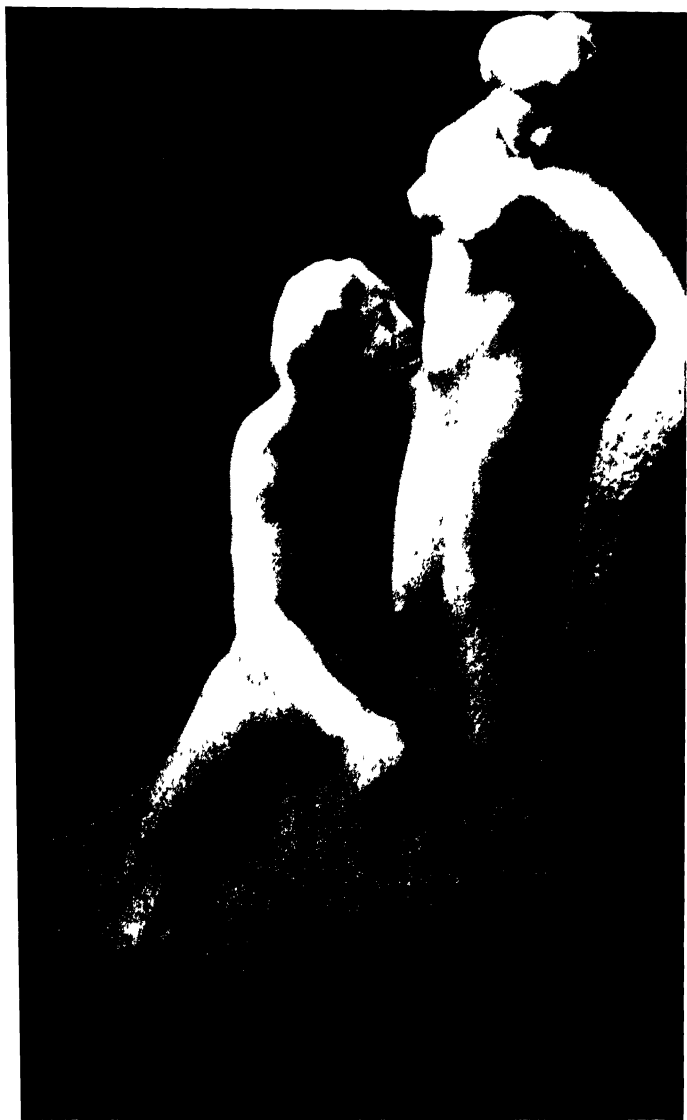
At two that afternoon, Rodin gaily arrived at Biron with a large bag of sweets. While setting to work, he talked to Marcelle about the many New Year's Days he had passed in crazy adventures. According to his versions, he had always been the victim. Then he spoke about Camille, and, after a few minutes' silence, he murmured:

"When women have for rivals bronze, marble, and the all-creating clay, they will find the sculptor is a poor lover to choose."

Meanwhile, the duchess became difficult. One morning Rodin arrived early at the Hotel Biron where he was to meet Gabriele d'Annunzio, with whom he was taking a journey. The Italian poet arrived, accompanied by a most lovely lady, who led a white greyhound as enchanting as herself.

Rodin did not feel like introducing his own sweetheart, so the strange trio departed, little d'Annunzio walking between the great-shouldered sculptor and the fair damsel.

As soon as they had left, the duchess broke out in a fury. "It is my own fault," she screamed.





"I, who could have kings! I pay dearly in my world for having given myself to this peasant, this rustic, this idiot, this ignorant old lump called Rodin!"

Some days later, Marcelle Tirel came to Rodin in the great studio at Meudon, and revealed the numerous amours of the duchess, which he would never have found out for himself. The great man leaned against *Ugolino* and sobbed like a schoolboy disillusioned over his first love.

"I'm a fool and a wretch," he moaned. Marcelle tried to comfort him, while pointing out the time and talent he had wasted on a love as false as it was tenacious. Rodin's hair had grown white, but his muscles were those of a stripling. His heart was as young as the trees in spring, and his imagination burnt with the flame of youth. Neither years nor experience could blunt that sensitive, trusting mind, and he did not hesitate to weep over the frailty of a stupid, middle-aged woman.

The queer love was over, and he minded desperately. It was hard to put the woman out of his life who had been the figure on which he draped his childish dreams. She had been his muse and his mistress, Euterpe and Minerva in turn. Even



then she was waiting for him at Biron, with her trunks packed for new wanderings!

Marcelle reminded him of the faithful Rose, and begged him not to continue making a fool of himself. He listened quietly, and sorrow deepened the strong lines of his face. But vanity is the vulnerable point of all men. After a few minutes of painful thought, he decided it was beneath the dignity of the greatest sculptor of the age to throw his heart to false women, and listened to Marcelle.

"Go for a trip with Madame Rodin and you will return cured," she advised.

Constancy often seems dull, until disillusion comes. An hour later he departed for Normandy, and Rose went with him.

The wide fields, the beauty of dark ploughed earth and tinted woods had the required effect on Rodin's equilibrium. He came back a changed man. Freed from the shackles of wanton woman, he plunged into work with new courage and energy. He saw the old friends who had been driven away by the duchess's tantrums.

That lady, however, was not prepared to resign herself to Fate. Angry at being jilted, she hurled

threats against her betrayer. The inevitable morning came when she burst into the Hotel Biron, draped in dark veils, to throw herself on her knees before Rodin and start a dramatic scene. Tears and cries were to no avail. His heart had been hurt and hardened. Rodin stood up calmly, laid aside his drawing, called the servant, and pointed at the kneeling woman:

“Show Madame out.”

She retired in fury, and the tragi-comedy ended. She continued to write to Rodin, however, and he sent her money in secret (or, as he imagined, in secret, for neither bank notes nor sighs could escape Marcelle).

Then came regret. “I’ve wasted seven years of my life. That woman was a bad inspiration; she took me for a fool, and made everyone else think the same thing. I’ll never wake up from this nightmare. My God!”

Rodin could not reason with the depression that seized him; it became at times an obsession. Rose was his only comfort.

He went to the Louvre with Paul Gsell. They stopped before his beloved *Venus de Milo*. “There is the marvel of marvels!” And the Vic-

tory of Samothrace. . . . "Their Victory . . . their Liberty; how different she is from ours!"

One day in November, Gsell visited Rodin at the Villa des Brillants. He was about to depart, on hearing that the Master was ill, when a door opened upstairs, and a deep voice shouted for him to come up.

Rodin was sitting before the fire in his dressing gown and slippers. They started to discuss religion.

"If by a religious man you mean one who subjects himself to certain practices, who bows to certain dogmas," said Rodin, "then I am not religious. Who is in this century? Who can resign his reason and his critical sense?"

"But in my opinion, religion is more than the stammering of a creed. It is the feeling of all that is unexplained and inexplicable in the world. It is the adoration of that Unknown Force which maintains the universal laws and which conserves different types of beings; it is the suspicion of all that Nature does not reveal to our senses, of the enormous world of things that neither the eyes of the body nor the eyes of the soul can see. It is the

surge of our consciousness toward the infinite, toward eternity, toward wisdom and love without limit, promises which are perhaps illusionary but which, in this life, make our brains flutter as if they had wings. In that sense I am religious."

Long after he had given up the regular practice of his faith, Rodin remarked, "When I was young and went to communion I truly absorbed a force that transformed me."

Rodin was ill again in 1911. He was separated from Rose and all his friends. Marcelle forced her way, and found him looking tired and sad. The sweat poured off his brow, and he suffered continual thirst. A bowl of tisane steamed beside him. In his left hand was a small antique torso, which he caressed perpetually and in silence, his fingers finding pleasure and delight in the minute muscles and his dim eyes lighting with admiration.

Next day he was taken back to Meudon where Rose could look after him, and for several weeks he remained on his favorite milk diet.

One morning later Rodin arrived at the Hotel Biron in a rage. "I've learned that she used to be

a circus performer, and horsewhipped her husband into marrying her."

It was some time before Marcelle realized he was raving about his former love.

"I believed all her lies. It's true that she rode very well, but what on earth hasn't she done?"

The secretary reminded him that a model was freezing in the studio. He rushed up to find a frail girl shivering on the dais. For the moment the duchess and her circus exploits were forgotten. Rodin comforted the little model with 50 francs and some sweets, while Marcelle scolded in the background.

Yet he could not completely forget.

Two years after the farewell he suddenly asked Marcelle, "If I had beaten Madame, do you think she would have loved me?" By this time the secretary was beyond astonishment.

"Oh Master you would have knocked her out with one blow," she answered truthfully, having the previous day watched him lift a bronze *Bellona* and place it effortlessly on a high pedestal.

Rodin entertained the idea of organizing a museum for his works. It was Mlle Judith Cladel who suggested the Hotel Biron.

Rodin made approaches, but the State refused to have anything to do with the matter. The sculptor was greatly upset, and went to Meudon for several days to walk off his rage on the hill tops. Rose was delighted to have him with her, and she carefully prepared all his favorite dishes.

While modeling, Rodin's thought would suddenly revert to the ingratitude of the State.

"They are idiots. They understand nothing about art, anyhow! And then, we are in such a decadence!"

To distract him, Marcelle would start a discussion on Order, which was a favorite subject.

"When I was young, I used to lose all my tools, I could never lay my hands on them. My poor Rose. You had to bear enough unjust reproaches for that!"

Her eyes filled with tears, but she answered, "I don't remember, my dear; go on, work! I am happy when you are here."

When she announced the lunch, Rodin turned to her, and said with curious sweetness, "I like obedient women."

That evening he walked in the garden with Rose and his secretary.

"After all, I would be pretty stupid to give my wonderful collections, as well as my works, to the State."

That night he shut himself in the big drawing room, and drafted the following will:

"I, Auguste Rodin, sound in body and mind, bequeath to the State all my works and antiques, and charge the authorities to give a pension for the maintenance of Mlle Marie-Rose Beuret, who has been with me all my life. If the State does not accept, I give my works to various museums in other countries and I ask Octave Mirbeau, etc., etc. . . . to see that my wishes are carried out."

Next day he forgot about it, and Marcelle overheard him whispering with Rose about their wealth and honors.

"My riches are incomparable," Rodin was saying gleefully, and gently put his arms around her.

Yet the idea of giving his works and his collection of pictures and antiques to France never left him.

Rose coughed all night, and her suffering wore on Rodin's nerves. It was a curious thing, that he could not help being angry with the people for whom he was sorry.

"You keep me awake," he roared irritably.

"Egoist!" replied a feeble voice through the darkness.

They squabbled like children over trifles. It was hard to know their humor from one hour to the next. At last they devised an arrangement whereby the first to fly into a temper should as a punishment give the other 100 francs. Marcelle was the referee. Needless to add, Rodin always proved the offender. The slightest thing would set him off, but he paid up gallantly enough. On one occasion at Biron he suddenly remembered a debt, and sent a servant straight to Meudon with his tribute.

The secretary discovered Rodin and Rose fighting over the household expenses. She wanted 500 francs a month, while Rodin decreed that 300 francs should suffice. It ended by his slipping 1,000 francs into her hand; and when he was in the big studio, he whispered to Marcelle, "Go and tell Rose that I am not cross, that, as I cannot restore her health, I want to make her the happiest of women."

That afternoon he was inquiring, "How is my puss?" every five minutes.



Rose always had difficulty in getting him to meals on time. Once he began working, the world of soup and potatoes ceased to exist.

One Sunday Rose was running about to serve him, when Rodin told her, "Sit still. I will serve you for a bit."

"Oh! Such a man to serve a peasant like me!"

In her emotion she forgot to give him coffee, with the result that he scolded her all the afternoon. Marcelle reproached him.

"My wife loves me because she admires me," he said firmly, "otherwise she would hate me." And very softly he added, "and she would have reason."

A few minutes later Rose told her, "I have only one wish, that he should be happy."

Rodin was always worried if he saw Rose talking to Marcelle, for he was afraid that the secretary might reveal more of his indiscretions.

One day a favorite ginger cat leaped onto the sculptor's knees and entangled itself in his beard.

"Look," said Rose, "he is just the same color as your beard when you were young. If he runs about after women as much as you did . . . !"

"I did my duty as a man," replied Rodin with dignity.

"Red-haired people are always very good or very bad," she said.

"I was often told that when I was still red-headed," remarked Rodin, "and yet I never did any harm."

"You don't remember," murmured his lady.

At Meudon the servants were addressed as *Monsieur*, but at Biron Rodin liked to be *grand seigneur*, and treated them roughly.

For a time he had an English *valet de chambre*, and as he could not remember his name always called him "My-lord." The phlegmatic Englishman was unmoved and unamused by the sculptor crying, "My-lord, *ici!* My-lord, *nom de Dieu.*" My-lord did not remain for long.

When Rodin was made grand-officer in the Legion of Honor he received letters of congratulation from every corner of the globe. There was an official reception at the *Elysée*, and the sculptor was all day getting himself ready. Marcelle reminded him of his decorations, but he did not know how to put them on. At last, he stuffed them all into his trouser pocket and started.

"I will get the man in charge of the cloakroom to put them on at the Presidency," he said.

Another morning he arrived at the Hotel Biron in a state of frantic haste.

"Quick, quick, help me to dress. . . . The maid is not there, I am going to the funeral of my great friend Doctor Bigot. I have just received the telegram. It is at midday."

Marcelle helped him to dress. He asked for his notebook and some sharp pencils.

"While following the procession," he explained, "I will write my thoughts on friendship."

Off he went, leaving the telegram behind. Marcelle read it. Doctor Bigot had been buried for a week!

Two hours later Rodin returned in fine spirits.

"Just think! When I arrived at the mortuary, there was no sign of a procession, so I told the driver, 'I am late. Go in the direction of Père Lachaise, and follow the first funeral procession you meet.'"

Meanwhile he scribbled away in the notebook. At Père Lachaise Rodin descended and followed the crowd. No one recognized him as he toiled

up the hill that is so weirdly decked with tombstones and vaults.

The Master hated funerals, and the fact that no one spoke to him put him in a good humor for the rest of the day. Having sent away his model with 20 francs, he abandoned himself to writing till evening. The book containing his notes, however, was lost in the train on the way back to Meudon.

One day Marcelle forgot to close a door. The Master's indignation arose.

"You don't seem to realize whom you are with. My health ought to be your constant worry. I'm somebody, you know!"

A servant was immediately ordered to follow him around shutting all the doors he passed through.

Rodin complained bitterly of the disorderliness of the world.

"I've always been untidy," he admitted. "My poor mother scolded me constantly for that. There are some people who spend their lives putting things in order. The Anglo-Saxons are very keen on it, but they do nothing else! They are

not at all artistic. As for myself, I like order, measure, balance."

Half an hour after this discourse, Rodin might be observed in the garden, leaving a trail of lost notes behind him.

One afternoon Rodin arrived at the Hotel Biron in a temper. On seeing three armchairs badly arranged around Marcelle's desk, he moaned plaintively about disorder. She had jumped up to arrange the offending furniture, when he suddenly stopped her.

"There is nothing unimportant in life," he said. "These armchairs look just as if they were holding a conversation. What are they talking about?" he waved his hand vaguely.

"Doubtlessly of the past," hazarded the dazed secretary.

"No, you silly, they are talking about the posteriors that have sat on them."

In the huge, empty rooms of the Hotel Biron, Rodin crept around his marbles with a candle in each hand. The flames flickered in the darkness and cast curious shadows in this world of stone people. He often made his models pose by candle-light, and discovered many strange profiles of the

body shown up in this way. Alone in his vast mansion, the old man still struggled to grasp that elusive truth which is just beyond the reach of all men and all artists . . . for ever, it seems!

"I have loved women so much," he said one day, "that now it is pleasant to discover that I view them only from the point of view of sculpture."

His secretary was glad to hear the news!

Rodin struggled with the book of notes on architecture which was to be published under the name of *Les Cathédrales de la France*. He was a sculptor, not a writer, and the time he wasted scribbling incoherent thoughts and impressions should have been spent in finishing his immense monument *The Tower of Labor*. One cannot serve two masters.

The big library of the Hotel Biron was full of books which Rodin would occasionally open, peruse, and swiftly replace.

"There are no real sculptors or painters," he said, "since they have started giving prizes. That is what kills art and the artists. To win these prizes they try to be new and original, and start cubism, which is a joke that tears one's heart out. All art is in the human body. Bernini used a man

to make the door of a palace. Flowers have served as decoration, trees have given columns. All architecture comes from the earth, from man. But at present they occupy themselves with cubism."

One morning he was designing a bas-relief while Marcelle read his letters. Suddenly he interrupted her "Cher monsieur, etc.," with, "My poor cathedrals which feel they are dying have a smile for me," and he began to discourse on Gothic art, flowers, trees, and Nature, with a fluency he never had in public.

A cutting from the *Argus* infuriated him.

"Some fools reproach me with not finishing my sculpture! Is Nature ever finished? Does one measure trees? I won't complete anything any more, just to annoy them. I will make antiques. Ah! Phidias! What ignoramus judges us!"

He went straight into the studio, where he cut the head off *St. John the Baptist*, and the work became *The Man Who Walks*. Rodin stamped out into the garden.

"Leave me alone. I am tired. I must think! I want to think." 🐾

He wandered off in his long overalls to meditate,







PALLAS COIFFÉE  
DU PARTHENON



RODIN

pulling his beard and wrinkling his forehead as he went. Suddenly he tore back to Marcelle.

“Did the dog do what it should this morning?”

So the years flowed on between Meudon and Biron, and each day was a life.

Every night Rose went around the huge studio, covering her master's work with wet cloths. A poor, bent, old woman she had become, yet still she worked for him and loved him, and in the evening light her hands moved with gentle sureness, as when she was a girl.

## *Nijinsky*

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If my virtue be a dancer's virtue and if I  
often sprung with both feet into golden-  
emerald rapture. . . .

NIETZSCHE

WHEN DIAGHILEV brought the Russian Ballet to Paris, Rodin had talked of little else. He helped Marcel Proust, the Comtesse de Noailles, Jacques-Emile Blanche, and others to throw the artistic and literary circles of the city into a frenzy of anticipation.

Seldom had such an audience been gathered in any theatre as that which attended the première in 1909. The entr'acte was applauded right through. Nijinsky drove home, alone and bewildered, through the lamp-lit streets. Diaghilev went off to a party.

Three years later, on May 29, 1912, all Paris

gathered to see Nijinsky's first ballet. Rodin sat in a box close to the stage. The audience was tense with excitement over *l'Après-midi d'un Faune*. In the program they read:

"A faun dozes  
Nymphs dupe him  
A forgotten scarf fulfills his dream  
The curtain falls so that the poem may  
begin in everyone's memory."

Rodin smiled with satisfaction. It might have been one of his own dreams materialized.

Nijinsky as the faun, slumbrous, exquisite, desirable, caught the spirit of that forgotten Greece which Rodin loved and understood. The young Russian expressed the wisdom of his soul with his perfect, incredibly trained body. He revealed, not the decadent sensuousness of Greek beauty, but the ecstatic awakening of youth.

For twelve minutes the audience sat motionless, too surprised to give any sign. The curtain fell, and a storm of wild applause and noisy disapproval broke loose. Rodin stood up in his box and shouted, "Bravo! Bravo!" at the top of his voice. Others whistled.

The curtain went up, and *l'Après-midi d'un Faune* was performed again. After this, the applause became frantic.

In Nijinsky's dressing room, there was indescribable chaos; no one knew whether the ballet had been a success or a stupendous failure. Rodin came up with tears in his eyes and took Nijinsky in his arms. "The fulfillment of my dreams. You brought them to life—I can but thank you."

Nijinsky felt that he was understood by the artists, at any rate.

Next morning the newspapers were almost unanimous in their applause. Only *Figaro* ran an extraordinary attack. On the front page appeared the following review, written by the well-known M. Calmette, editor and owner of the paper:

#### A Faux Pas

Our readers will not find, in its accustomed place under "Theatre," the criticism of my worthy collaborator Robert Brussel, upon the first performance of *l'Après-midi d'un Faune*, choreographic scene by Nijinsky, directed and danced by that astonishing artist.

I have eliminated that review.

There is no necessity for me to judge Debussy's music, which, besides, does not in itself constitute a novelty, as it is nearly ten years old, and my incompetence is too

complete upon the transcriptions of these subtleties for me to be able to discuss with eminent critics, or the younger amateurs who tax a masterpiece with the reading of "Prelude, Interlude, and Paraphrase Finale," transposed by a dancer upon the work of Mallarmé.

But I am persuaded that all the readers of *Figaro* who were at the Châtelet yesterday will not object if I protest against the most extraordinary exhibition which they presumed to serve us as a profound production, performed with a precious art and a harmonious lyricism.

Those who speak of art and poetry apropos of this spectacle make fun of us. It is neither a gracious epilogue nor a profound production. We have had a faun, incontinent, with vile movements of erotic bestiality and gestures of heavy shamelessness. That is all. And the merited boos were accorded the too-expressive pantomime of the body of an ill-made beast, hideous, from the front, even more hideous in profile.

These animal realities the true public will never accept.

M. Nijinsky, little accustomed to such a reception, badly prepared likewise for such a role, took his revenge a quarter of an hour afterwards with the exquisite interpretation of the *Spectre de la Rose*, so prettily written by M. J. L. Vandoyer.

Calmette knew nothing about art, but his opinions meant much to the public at large. Rumors spread through the city that *l'Après-midi d'un Faune* might be stopped as an obscene spectacle.

Next morning the whole city was surprised by an article on the front editorial page of *Le Matin* signed by Auguste Rodin.

During the last twenty years, dancing seems to have set for itself its task of making us love the beauty of the body, movement, and gesture. First there came to us from the other side of the Atlantic the famous Loie Fuller, who has been justly called the rejuvenator of dancing. Then came Isadora Duncan, teacher of an old art in a new form, and today we see Nijinsky, who possesses at the same time talent and training. The intelligence of his art is so rich and so varied that it approaches genius.

In dancing, as well as in sculpture and painting, flight and progress have been smothered by routine laziness, and inability to rejuvenate. We admire Loie Fuller, Isadora Duncan, and Nijinsky, because they have recovered again the soul of tradition, founded on respect and love of nature. This is the reason why they are able to express all the emotions of the human soul.

The last of them, Nijinsky, possesses the distinct advantage of physical perfection, harmony of proportions, and a most extraordinary power to bend his body so as to interpret the most diverse sentiments. The sad mime in *Petrouchka* seems, in the last bound of the *Spectre de la Rose*, to fly into the infinite space, but in no part is Nijinsky as marvellous and admirable as in *L'Après-midi d'un Faune*. No jumps, no bounds, nothing but attitudes and gestures of a half-conscious animal creature. He stretches himself, bends, stoops, crouches, straightens

himself up, goes forward and retreats, with movement now slow, now jerky, nervous, angular: his eyes search, his arms extend, his hands open and close, his head turns away and turns back. The harmony between his mimicry and his plasticity is perfect. His whole body expresses what his mind dictates. He possesses the beauty of the antique frescoes and statues; he is the ideal model for whom every painter and sculptor has longed.

You would think Nijinsky were a statue when he lies full length on the rock, with one leg bent and the flute at his lips, as the curtain rises, and nothing could be more soul-stirring than his movement when, at the close of the act, he throws himself down and passionately kisses the discarded veil.

I wish that every artist who truly loves his art might see this perfect personification of the ideals of the beauty of the ancient Greeks.

Thus spoke Rodin of the greatest dancer of all time. Calmette, having appointed himself guardian of the morals of Paris, was furious at this tribute. To save his face he immediately attacked the sculptor.

I admire Rodin deeply as one of our most illustrious and able sculptors, but I must decline to accept his judgment on the question of theatrical morality. I have only to recall that, in defiance of common propriety, he exhibits in the former chapel of the Sacré Coeur and in the deserted apartments of the excellent nuns at Hôtel Biron, a series of objectionable drawings and cynical



sketches, which depict with great brutality and in further detail the shameless attitudes of the *Faune*, who was justly hissed at the Châtelet. And, now that I am speaking my mind, I may say that the morbid mimicry represented by the dancer on the stage the other evening moves me to less indignation than the spectacle offered every day by Rodin in the ancient convent of the Sacré Coeur to regiments of hysterical women admirers and self-satisfied snobs. It is inconceivable that the State—in other words the French taxpayer—should have purchased the Hôtel Biron for 5,000,000 francs simply to allow the richest of our sculptors to live there. Here is a real scandal, and it is the business of the Government to put a stop to it.

A world-wide controversy resulted.

The Anti-Faunists became Anti-Rodinists. Calmette had poked his stick into a wasps nest. The admirers of Rodin were many, and a storm of protest was aroused. M. Pierre Mortier, editor of *Gil Blas*, leaped to the defense of Rodin, pointed out that the faun was the leit-motif of his art, and declared that instead of being turned out, the sculptor should be maintained for life in the Hotel Biron. If he could leave his work to France, the mansion should be converted into a Rodin Museum.

The most eminent names in France were enlisted in a campaign to support Rodin. Friends appeared

in every circle, including the ex-president Loubet, Poincaré, Premier Clemenceau, Briand, Barthou, Anatole France, Monet, Maurice Barrès, Blanche, and a host of other writers, artists, and politicians (including, of course, Judith Cladel).

*Figaro* continued to harp on Rodin's disrespectfulness in what had once been a convent. A large caricature by Forain was published, depicting Rodin in his studio at the courtyard of the Hotel Biron. A model enters with a dress over her arm.

"Oh Master, where can I put my clothes while I pose?" Rodin replies, "Just there in the chapel."

This childish gibe was intended to arouse the religious animosity of the suburbs. A new list of supporters flocked to Rodin's side. Forain, the cartoonist, was attacked by the critic Louis Vauxcelles for his lack of esthetic self-respect in demeaning himself to draw the caricature.

Rodin was asked to defend himself, but he had had enough of controversy for one lifetime, and simply replied.

"I have no time to waste on answering M. Calmette's attack on me. I admire Nijinsky's work, and consider him a marvel of harmony. He is a dancer of genius. I wish so noble an effort as the

faun could be understood in its entirety, and that all artists could come for instruction to this spectacle of beauty."

The Anti-Faunist, Anti-Rodin papers were silenced. Police appeared at the Châtelet, and saw a free performance, for which it now required a political intrigue to obtain tickets.

From Paris to Constantinople, from London to St. Petersburg, from Berlin to New York, *l'Après-midi d'un Faune* was discussed. Diaghilev smiled triumphantly, and basked in the glare of world publicity.

All that Rodin wanted as recompense for his part in the battle was that the dancer should pose. Many artists had tried to paint or model Nijinsky, but they had to steal opportunities back stage, or when he was rehearsing. Now it was arranged that every morning after his practice the dancer should be motored to Meudon to pose.

Diaghilev often dropped and fetched him at the studio. He did not remain, for the extraordinary man who brought the Russian Ballet to Europe was extremely busy. Rodin preferred to work alone, in any case.

The sculptor made his usual sketches, passionately interested in the muscles of his perfectly developed model. Nijinsky posed in the nude, and Rodin who had seen and loved so much beauty was carried away by his exquisite grace.

"Each pose is a living Michelangelo, Donatello, Giovanni de Bologna."

Rodin finally decided on an attitude rather like that of Michelangelo's *David*.

Nijinsky posed steadily and well. The two men could not speak, for they had no common language, but a bond that needed no words drew them together. When Nijinsky grew tired, Rodin motioned him to sit and showed him all his sketches. The sculptor drew what he wanted to explain; Nijinsky expressed himself by movements. Each spoke in his own language, and their friendship developed swiftly into the perfect, equal understanding of two consummate artists.

Diaghilev soon sensed that something impenetrable lay between the two men. He grew jealous, for in spite of his brilliance he was no artist, and he could not comprehend the overflowing silence that can link two men of the same calibre. Rodin and

Nijinsky did not need words. They knew instinctively that their interests and ideals were the same.

The sittings were divided by lunch, which was a rest for both. The food was simple, as usual. Rodin hated fancy cooking, but he was an expert on wine.

At his table the best wines of France, and especially his favorite Burgundy, were poured forth. Nijinsky ate carefully. He was not used to wine, but he tasted and enjoyed whatever Rodin offered him.

One July afternoon, when the air was heavy, storm-laden and suffocating, Nijinsky felt sleepy after the meal which had followed the hours of posing, and Rodin let him lie down on a couch in his private sanctuary. The old sculptor covered him with a shawl and sat down at his feet. Soon he too was asleep.

Diaghilev arrived unusually early that afternoon. He found the house open and apparently deserted. Rose too had probably been overwhelmed by the general tendency to take a nap. Through room after room he wandered. Suddenly he came on the unexpected tableau. There

lay the faun, sleeping peacefully on a sofa, with the sculptor, eyes closed, like a weary satyr at his feet.

Knowing Rodin's immoral reputation, Diaghilev's jealousy became uncontrollable. He mentioned the incident to only one person, but Nijinsky was never allowed to pose again. Suave Diaghilev found continual excuses to prevent the sittings. The curious man who had given so much to art, deliberately robbed the world of a masterpiece because it suited him to do so, because he envied what he could not understand.

## *World War*

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War is an anachronism.

NAPOLEON

**R**ODIN continued to live quietly in the state of utter disorder against which he so enjoyed preaching. His beautiful possessions gave him great pleasure. He cared more for his Gauguins and Rousseaus than he could ever have cared for a child.

As he grew older, he traveled more, and worked less. March 1914 found him at Menton (Alpes Maritimes). He was happy as a school boy in the beautiful mountains.

Occasionally he went to stay with his many friends in England, and on rare occasions Rose accompanied him. She was very shy, but observant, and did her best to copy the people who impressed

her. At Hill Hall (Mrs. Charles Hunter's house in Essex) she saw all the grand ladies knitting. No sooner had they arrived back in London than she went off to buy bales of wool. Rodin was staying with John Tweed at the time, and Rose carried a whole suitcase full into his drawing room. Tweed's small daughter Ailsa helped her to wind it until Rodin came in. He was indignant, and sternly insisted on holding the wool himself.

Rodin's many engagements kept him occupied. At one dinner party he sat next to the beautiful Lady D—. They discussed immortality. She asked him to produce proofs to justify his firm belief in the eternal soul, and he vowed to do so.

Next day, lunching with an intimate friend and knowing Rodin was to be there, Lady D— asked if she might take her small son, that in later years he might remember having met a great man. When the child sat down at the tea table and contemplated with interest the great, white-bearded artist, Rodin turned around and said in his curious sincere way, "How is it possible, Madame, that you do not believe in immortality, when you always have that little angel before your eyes?"

What could a Mama answer?



On leaving, the same lady asked Rodin to lunch with her the following week, and, having heard he had a wife, she included Madame in the invitation. Rodin accepted blithely for himself, but at the mention of Rose he hesitated. Poor Rose, who had never learned to read or write, might not be at her ease at a literary luncheon! Then, with exquisite tact, determined not to offend anyone, he explained the situation:

“Oh, it’s very nice of you, it’s charming, but my wife, you understand—she has very . . . simple tastes.”

The hostess understood perfectly.

The year 1914 saw his *Citizens of Calais* set up in bronze on the Thames embankment beside the House of Lords. That summer there was a loan exhibition of contemporary art at Grosvenor House, the town residence of the Duke of Westminster. Rodin lent nineteen of his works. The season was in full swing, and parties were given every night in gay prewar fashion. One evening the Duke gave a dance at very short notice. Royalty was invited, and Rodin had his first pair of knee breeches made within twenty-four hours.



NERO (DRAWING)

METROPOLITAN



DRAWING OF A  
WOMAN



HENRI BECQUE (DRY POINT)

METROPOLITAN

The tailor did his best, but as the sculptor ascended the ducal staircase there was an ominous crack, and Rodin's black breeches split disconcertingly at both knees.

Pandemonium! Footmen rushed hither and footmen dashed thither.

"Mr. Rodin's breeches 'ave split."

The sculptor gazed crossly down at his unaccustomed attire, until the Duchess' maid appeared with needle and thread to stitch him up. Then he moved gingerly into the ballroom.

When Rodin returned to enjoy the hot weather at Meudon, he found the great hotel at Bellevue transformed by the tireless, if tragic, Isadora Duncan. The death of her two children had almost broken that strange, ecstatic spirit, and she had come to rest on the hill opposite. A friend had bought and given her the large hotel with its terrace overlooking all Paris and its gardens sloping to the river, so that she might create a dancing school and forget her sorrow in the establishment of her art. Rodin wandered out into his garden, and smiled approvingly at the hill opposite, while

the banal hotel was transformed into a "Temple of the Dance of the Future."

Fifty children were chosen, and within a few months they had made great progress. Saturday being Artists' Day, a public lesson was given in the morning. Then a great lunch was served for children and artists together. If possible, it took place in the garden. In the afternoon, there was music, poetry, and dancing.

Rodin came over frequently. It was a veritable haven of beautiful contentment. When they were not dancing, the children ran through the woods, laughing and shouting in their many-colored capes. Rodin sketched them as they danced, and once he turned to Isadora:

"If only I had such models when I was young! Models who can move, and move according to Nature and harmony! I have had beautiful models, it is true, but never one who understood the science of movement as your pupils do."

It was August 1914. The sky was heavy with black clouds, silent, and ominous. Rumor of war had passed over Rodin's skeptical head. Hating

war, he chose to ignore the general excitement, until suddenly he found it impossible to get any money.

Marcelle was dispatched to borrow from his old friends M. Peytel and M. Dorizon, who had come to his rescue over the Pavilion Rodin in 1900. Drums rattled, and the perturbing news of mobilization crept over France.

Poor old Rataplan was requisitioned by the military authority. He was stiff and rheumatic now, and accustomed to a sleepy life, interrupted only by occasional outings when Rodin wanted to be driven out to look at the sky and vaguely note his impressions.

"To think that I've got to see another war!" moaned Rose. "My poor Rataplan! Our poor old Rataplan!"

The tears streamed down her cheeks, while Rataplan marched sedately away.

Mme Hanako, the little Japanese actress, arrived in a flurry from Germany. She had to leave on account of the mobilization, and wrote to Rodin, "I have only German money."

He immediately sent for her to stay at Meudon

until she could arrange her affairs. He was radiant at the thought of having his wonderful model again.

"I will work at a new mask; a mask of her dying."

After lunch, when Mme Hanako was comfortably established, Rodin asked Marcelle to walk with him in the garden. After a long, embarrassed silence, he asked her to go to Saint-Ouen, to bring his son Auguste to see him.

"You will tell him that, as one cannot know what events are leading to, he ought to be here with us. Perhaps he will not want to come. I think he has a girl. Tell him to bring her with him. I don't know how it will work, we have never been able to get on together. He is proud, blundering, very sensitive. And to think he has some talent, the fool, and has never done anything. He's lazy."

"Did you ever help him?" asked Marcelle.

Rodin looked surprised.

"Go on. Tell him to come as he is, at once. See he returns with you. He needn't bring anything with him, he'll find all he wants here. Rose will give some dresses to his woman. Tell him

that I will arrange an exhibition of his pictures—that will induce him to come.”

Marcelle was about to depart when he caught hold of her and stared into her face with sudden attention.

“You are free, energetic. Why don’t you marry Auguste? He’s not bad, and you could make something out of him. I will give you a nice dowry.”

Mme Rodin appeared.

“Rose, my puss, listen,” called Rodin. “I’m telling her she ought to marry Auguste.”

Rose blushed scarlet, and lowered her voice to answer.

“You are right. I would be very happy to know he was with a woman who knows how to work.”

At this point Marcelle interrupted the discussion.

“But Auguste has a companion. I don’t feel that I could break up their union, even if it is illegitimate.”

“Very well said,” cried Rose approvingly.

Rodin was silent. He looked annoyed, and Marcelle regretted her hasty words.



Next day the secretary went to Normandy. She found Auguste living in a kind of hut in Saint-Ouen. He made more money selling old clothes than he did as an engraver. Marcelle delivered her message. Being a true Rodin, his first question was, "And my girl?"

"Bring her with you."

He turned, and discussed the matter with his sweetheart, Nini, a sly-looking little Norman woman, with a black patch over one eye that had been hurt in a recent brawl. Marcelle watched Auguste, with pity in her heart. He looked unhappy, awkward, and timid. He was fifty, yet his dreadful childhood still seemed stamped on that weary face. He had never had a chance in life.

On the following day Auguste and his girl arrived at Meudon. They sat down to lunch with Rodin, safely installed between Mme Hanako and Marcelle. Rose waited on the whole strange party.

"Eat, Auguste; eat, my girl," she begged them.

"I'm not hungry, Maman," replied her son, who could hardly swallow his food from nervousness.

Nini gabbled on about how she hurt her eye. No one listened, until she electrified them by

starting to call Rodin papa, and Rose, maman. The sculptor nearly choked.

A few days later, squabbles began. Rodin forbade his son to call him papa.

"You must call me 'Maître' or 'Monsieur,' like your mother."

"Never," replied Auguste furiously.

"All right. You leave."

"Immediately," and Auguste tore off to pack his things.

"You forget yourself, you idiot," Rodin called. "Come with me, I need some help."

They went into the big studio, and started moving the casts about.

Rodin could not resist bullying his son, but Nini wasn't prepared to stand any nonsense. One day the sculptor called her a dirty "chiffonière." She stood up to him, hands on her hips, and replied in real "old clothes woman's" language. Rodin retreated.

A few days later he offered to make amends.

"Tell me, Madame, I want to give you a present. I want to buy you a costume. Simple . . . in two pieces. How do you call it?"

"A tailor-made, Monsieur Rodin?"

"Yes, that's it, a tailor-made. Will a hundred francs be enough?"

"Thank you very much, Monsieur Rodin. I really feel embarrassed."

"Well, go on sweeping so that everything is nice and clean, and see there are no papers in the garden."

There were no visitors at Meudon now. Everyone was occupied with war work. Even Madame la duchesse worked in a Red Cross establishment. Rodin dismissed the servants and studio technicians. Auguste grumpily fulfilled the role of gardener, and Nini did the house work.

Rodin went to Paris to get money. He collected eleven thousand francs in notes, counted them with infinite trouble, shoved his empty note-case back into his pocket, and crammed the notes into the outside pocket of his overcoat.

"If I'd lived in the time of François I, the king would have given me a pension."

He began to worry about his nineteen works which were being exhibited at Grosvenor House. It was impossible to bring them back in war time, and he could not afford to pay their insurance and storage in England. War, war, this hateful war—

it ruined everything! The ceaseless booming of Big Bertha wore on his nerves during those bright September days. Rodin was seventy-four, and knew what war meant. He saw the young men of his country marching out to horror and to death; he saw youth, the beautiful youth of France, trudging toward the devastated fields of Flanders. In 1870 there had been fighting and starvation and suffering, but never anything like this wholesale sacrifice. And it was but the beginning.

One day Rodin called his lady.

"Rose, my puss, get dressed. We are going away."

An hour later they arrived in Paris. Rose had a small case in her hand; her master carried his yellow money bag strapped across his shoulders.

Rose did not dare inquire their destination for fear of putting her lord in a bad temper. Marcelle met them at the Gare des Invalides.

"Where are you going, dear Master?" she asked persuasively. He answered with a sweet smile.

"I am taking my wife to the Hotel Biron. We will stay there together. Come at three o'clock, and help her to get installed."

At three that afternoon, Marcelle arrived at the

Hotel Biron, and the servant told her that Monsieur and Mme Rodin had gone to England. They had left neither address nor instructions, and had taken no luggage whatsoever, not even night clothes or a toothbrush. In the same airy manner they might have sailed for China, leaving Auguste and Marcelle without money to run the houses at Biron and Meudon. Chaos ensued. Auguste got a job in a factory, and one of Rose's relatives installed herself in the Hotel Biron and refused to move. Her husband had been mobilized, and she had a gay time receiving soldiers.

Meanwhile Rodin arrived in London with Rose following obediently, if wearily, at his heels. They had no plans, and beneath the grim arches of Victoria Station they suddenly felt as dismal as the babes in the wood. The boy babe glanced hopelessly around, fingered his beard, and decided to call upon the assistance of his friend John Tweed, who would be sure to make all the necessary arrangements. Tweed had a friend, Miss Emilie Grigsby, in whose large house at the corner of Brook and Gilbert Streets there was always room for artists in distress. He asked her if she could put up Monsieur and Madame Rodin for the

night. Delighted, she offered to keep them as long as they could stay.

Rose was overcome with shyness when she heard of the invitation. "Oh, how provoking," she said to Tweed. Her opinion was, however, seldom consulted. That evening Rodin and his lady arrived (to the amazement of the footman) at 80 Brook Street.

The climate of London made Rodin cough. "The guns drive me from France, and the fogs drive me from England," he told Emilie Grigsby. She noticed how much he worried about his works at Grosvenor House. For hours on end the sculptor stood and watched the men drilling on Gilbert Street. If anyone came near, he would drag them to the window too. "Such beautiful men," he murmured. "What angels of strength and beauty! How well they move!" He never tired of watching, for the sight had not yet become tragic.

At Brook Street, Rose could not be induced to come down to dinner. Miss Grigsby thought it was because she had no clothes, and offered to dress her up, but even in her best Rose refused to appear in public. At last, Emilie questioned her, and discovered the true reason of her embarrassment.

Lifting her dark brown eyes that once had been so large and smiling, Rose confessed the awful truth.

"Mademoiselle—you don't understand. I am here under false pretenses, false pretenses. You see, I am not really his wife, and I shouldn't be here at all!"

Miss Grigsby comforted her to the best of her ability, but there was one weight she could not take off the poor woman's mind, for, as Rose explained pathetically, "When I get to the Gate of Heaven, and St. Peter asks to see my marriage lines, what will I do? He'll never let me in."

Her happiest moments were spent downstairs in the big kitchen, where, in spite of cooks, she could prepare for Rodin the simple dishes she knew he liked. The rest of the time, she slunk away in a corner, her hands patiently folded, and never raised her eyes.

Rodin was not an easy guest to manage, but his hostess understood the strange moods that beset him. Sometimes he felt that he must be near to the trees—it was an absolute necessity for him to feel their wise arms above him and listen to their soft rustling. He would suddenly decide to have his luncheon out in Hyde Park. Emilie Grigsby

would order a packet of sandwiches, and out they went together to sit under a rather sooty plane tree and forget wars and the troubles of life. Once he was alone and quiet, Rodin could drop the material world like a mantle. When he returned, he was another person, and very calm.

One of his most difficult habits was that of forgetting about the important people he asked to lunch. On one occasion Rodin invited the French ambassador M. Cambon, and Miss Grigsby found the gentleman sitting waiting in the hall. The sculptor had a violent desire for one of his tree luncheons that day, and nothing could deter him. Off they went, quite solemnly, to Hyde Park, M. Cambon, Rodin, and his good-natured hostess, to eat sandwiches in silence on the grass.

People were always trying to see Rodin, and it drove him frantic. When he was really upset by telephone bells ringing and invitations which he did not know how to refuse, the only cure was to go and sit in Hyde Park. He loved to watch people playing, children running on wide, grassy stretches, and dogs barking happily.

Rodin's daily massage was another rather embarrassing habit. He had a male masseur who beat



and slapped him for hours, and Rodin nearly always ordered him to come at lunchtime. The guests who hoped to see the famous sculptor were puzzled and dismayed by the moans and groans and strange cries that resounded down the marble staircase, for Rodin liked to leave his door open, to hear what was going on. When the ordeal was over, he might appear or he might not.

Miss Grigsby gave him her own sitting room in which to do as he pleased. He started one or two busts of this most gracious hostess, but always broke them up and begged her to be painted. Not even he could sculpture auburn hair and dove-blue eyes! As a rule, she discovered him in his room, feeling the muscles of a small Roman statue. He smiled with pleasure, while his fingers ran over the marble torso. "They are perfect, the muscles. Every single one is there. He knew his trade, that sculptor."

Emilie Grigsby had a delightful old 14th-century cottage at West Drayton where they often went for the day. Rodin loved the garden and the peace and sound of church bells, for at last he realized the evening of his life had come. Rose tired him, so she was not taken to the cottage, and

when he occasionally went off for a few days to the country, she remained behind. Miss Grigsby and Rodin ate their sandwiches in silence beneath the golden autumn trees, and under November 11, in her birthday book, he wrote in his ungrammatical style:

To Emily Grigsby  
Sweet queen of gardens,  
To the friend of her cottage,  
Also filled with mystic blooms!

The beautiful trees on the horizon are the picture of her greatest qualities.

Her friends will recognize her in this picture, I hope—  
A. Rodin

I would have made another in good clay, but I couldn't hope to.

Rodin could not keep his works in Grosvenor House for ever, or afford to pay the insurance back to France. He offered to lend them to the Victoria and Albert Museum. A loan exhibition was arranged with the help of John Tweed at the end of September. Rodin admired Tweed although their styles were different, and told Emilie Grigsby that Tweed was England's only great sculptor, and very strong-minded about his work.

"I have never been able to influence him, he is a classicist."

As the days wore on, and the war gave no sign of ending, or the insurance companies of reducing their rates, Rodin began to wonder what on earth he would do with his precious statues. Tweed advised him strongly to give them to the British nation. "At least you will know they will always be looked after." Rodin hesitated and wondered. Then Miss Grigsby joined in her plea.

"Give them to the men who are drilling outside," she begged. "Give them to those men whose beauty you admire so much."

Rodin walked over to the window and looked out at the tramping feet. He watched the fresh, ardent faces, the supple strength of their carriage—blue eyes, brown eyes, grey eyes, all attentive, all eager, hopeful, and pitifully young. Turning at last, he said quite simply, "My works shall be theirs."

Miss Grigsby and John Tweed were enraptured, and hurried off to make arrangements with the Victoria and Albert Museum. In November, the entire collection was formally accepted by the Museum authorities.





GIRL SEATED  
(DRAWING)



YOUNG WOMAN  
KNEELING

Rodin's task was over, and Miss Grigsby had to sail for America. She agreed to take Rodin's bust of E. H. Harriman, the Railroad King, with her. Mrs. Harriman insisted that it should be signed by the sculptor himself, but for some reason this made him indignant.

"Can you understand such a thing?"

Miss Grigsby tried to persuade him.

"Anyone could sign my name, but who can do my work?" queried Rodin.

In the end, he capriciously ordered Tweed to do it for him. Like the good friend he was, Tweed took up a chisel and hacked Rodin's name into the marble, feeling as guilty as if he were forging a bank check.

Miss Grigsby was sorry to lose Rodin, she had grown so fond of him. In spite of odd habits, his charm, simplicity, and philosophy enchanted her. Yet she could not help breathing a sigh of relief when the end of his visit grew near.

When she sailed, le Maître saw her off on the boat. He watched with horror while the crate containing his bust of Harriman was swung roughly up into the air with the common luggage. Once he had ascertained it was safe, he started to

fuss about its landing. Miss Grigsby could not have been given more detailed instructions had she been escorting an invalid child across the ocean. His parting presents to her were a small, exquisitely carved Chinese figure, and a copy of his book *Les Cathédrales de la France*.

So the visit ended. For the last time, Rodin sailed away from the fog-wreathed island where he had known much happiness.

On November 12, without any warning, Rodin reappeared in Paris. He did not stay for long however. Marcelle saw him in the few hours he had to spend between trains. He was drinking chocolate and learning English from a textbook. It was late to begin, but that did not dampen his ardor. "Please, Misteur, love you," he repeated, delighted with himself.

That night he left for Italy to make arrangements to do a bust of the Pope. Rose went with him. Several months later, at the end of February 1915, they returned to Paris. Rose was ill, her chest gave perpetual trouble. Marcelle dined with them. After the meal, Rodin drew, while Rose recounted their adventures.

"I must buy two nice dresses," she remarked suddenly.

Rodin dropped his pencil.

"More! But I bought you a lovely suit and a coat before leaving! We must be economical. You look very well as you are," he added without glancing at her.

"Did I say anything when you gave all your clothes to the servant at —?"

"It's not the same thing," he replied archly. "I am myself and I have the right to do as I choose. You are a different matter. . . ."

"Well, and what if I want to be elegant now like other women? I have money, I can pay for lovely dresses."

"They wouldn't suit you," said her lord crushingly. "Ah, you have money?"

"But yes, Auguste. I haven't touched my income for three months, and I've all my savings."

"Well," he gave in, "as you have money, go and buy yourself some dresses."

A few days later Rose grew seriously ill. Rodin hovered by her bedside, giving her no rest. In March he took her to Chatelet-en-Brie to recuper-



ate. It was in this spot that he had written, "All aspects of Nature are wonderful. One needs only love to penetrate their secret. One loving thought alone, the love of Nature has paid for my life."

On April 6, 1915, he departed again for Rome for a month and a half. His appointments with the Pope were dated. The sculptor was bad tempered, and not at all sure of success. "I've had such bad luck with my busts." While he was away, Rose lived quietly with her son at Meudon.

There was so much to do and see in Rome, that Rodin could not help but enjoy himself. He wandered about with various admirers, making remarks in that low, polite voice of his. "In art, the ancient sculptors knew how to sacrifice detail," he murmured on the steps of the Thermes Museum, and walked on.

One evening he lectured a young Italian sculptor on impatience.

"The artist must be calm, you are too anxious. You must work with the slow, forceful patience of water wearing away stone. Learn to see that work is an end in itself, not merely the means." Later he continued, "Nature! That is what one must study! It does not prevent one admiring the

works of the past, admiring them for their beauty and not copying them. I am supposed to be like the Greeks. If I am, it is because I copy Nature as they did. If I had merely imitated them, I should have done Neo-Greek work."

Rodin was not at all pleased with his august model. At the end of the third sitting, the Holy Father walked around the clay and asked, "What on earth is that?" At the end of May, the sculptor returned to finish the work at Meudon.

The enthusiasm which had been aroused at the outbreak of war turned into a frenzy. Rodin, who loved youth and the beauty of youth, was haunted by the knowledge of many thousands of men marching daily to devastation and death. During the long nights he heard the tramp of their boots, and in his mind he visualized the scenes of carnage, the stricken countryside and graveyards. At five every morning he was awakened by the boom of Big Bertha. News of dead and wounded arrived all day, and when darkness fell the city lived in perpetual expectancy of air raids. It was mad, wartime Paris!

Rodin bowed his head with misery. He could not work or rouse himself from the apathy which

fell upon him. Youth, youth, the beautiful youth of France. . . .

On the hill opposite, where Isadora Duncan's school of children had danced, a hospital for the wounded now stood. She had fled from her Acropolis, saying, "Take this house that was made for Art, and make a hospital to nurse the wounded." On the walls where bas-reliefs of bacchantes, and fauns, nymphs, and satyrs had once hung, now only a tortured Christ looked down with pity. In the rooms where small swift feet had danced and childish laughter echoed, there were only rows of disabled figures and thoughts of pain.

Summer passed, then autumn, and another winter came. Rodin looked across the valley to the great building that had been a Temple of Art, and as he realized the needless suffering, joy left his heart for ever.

## Marriage and Separation

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Nous sommes heureux, nous à qui rien n'appartient.

ON JULY 10, 1916, Rodin was unwell, and fell down stairs at the Villa des Brillants. For a time he was confined to bed, and various lady admirers insisted on nursing him. Among them was his old acquaintance, Loïe Fuller, the dancer, who seldom left his bedside. Rose suffered from her usual helpless jealousy, but could do nothing for fear of displeasing her master.

The other women who had appointed themselves *garde-malades* to the aged sculptor soon began to disagree. One lady started to model a bust of Rodin while he slept. When it was nearly finished, a rival burst in and threw it out of the window, and a hair-pulling contest ensued. Rodin

was too ill to take much interest in this diverting interlude, while the eternal martyr, Rose, hid in a cupboard, fingers in ears.

Marcelle Tirel soon suspected there was a plot afoot. As Rodin was seldom visible, she kept watch on the villa from neighboring fields, and finally uncovered a whole intrigue. One of Rodin's self-appointed nurses, a Mme B—, had induced the sick old man to send for a solicitor and to make a will dividing all his earthly possessions between her and Rose. The total would revert to whoever lived longer. Mme B— was forty and Rose seventy-two!

Rodin's friend, Judith Cladel, was informed, and repeated the curious story to the authorities. On August 2, the Under Secretary of State for the Beaux Arts summoned Marcelle to explain the case in detail. Two days later, Mlle Cladel and three grave-faced gentlemen arrived at Meudon to investigate the affair.

Rodin's ill-judged transaction was legally cancelled. It was definitely decided to procure his work for the State, and as the sculptor improved in health, he appeared to be pleased about the precautions taken. A general sigh of relief went up.

Commissions began to arrive at Meudon, and Rodin's collections and works (constituting his whole material wealth) were examined and valued by experts. The masterpieces which he had cared for with passionate tenderness were examined by appraisers with the minds of tradesmen. His studio was full of noisy feet, and in the room where he had evolved his curious philosophy, only money values were discussed.

The representatives of the State were annoyed by Loïe Fuller's continued presence, but they had nothing against her, and dared not to ask her to keep away.

On September 13, Rodin signed away his possessions to the State in return for a life pension. His friends were pleased, and the sculptor knew that after his death his wishes would be satisfied, and the Hotel Biron would become the Musée Rodin. When the agreement was read and signed, the sculptor gave one of his drawings to each witness as a souvenir.

Yet schemers were still at work, and Rodin was easily beguiled and fond of signing his name to documents he did not understand.

In December, the Guardian of the Luxembourg

wrote to Marcelle about Loïe Fuller, "I am reclaiming what I know she owes, but I am sure she owes much more. At the moment I advise you not to let R. sign anything. You might, without attracting attention, remove the pen and ink from the dining room. It is very probable that after the measures I am going to take there will be temptation to use it."

The State having taken over Rodin's affairs, he was no longer master in his own house. Three official guardians relieved each other at Meudon. When Rodin managed to reach his big studio, he was enraged to find everything in disorder. It was not likely that the old man would live through the winter, but the officials never left him in peace. They were determined to open the Rodin Museum in the following April.

Later the guardian wrote again: "I advise you at this moment to keep the greatest possible vigilance in respect to the dancer. She is going to try to obtain a signature which she needs greatly in order to free herself. Tell Mme Rodin it would be best to forbid her the house."

Guileless Rose, impressed by the lady's kindness, flew into a temper. "It's too much. I'm not

allowed to see whom I wish. Mlle Fuller is my friend. She has always been nice to me, and never comes empty-handed."

It took many explanations to persuade the poor old peasant woman that her friend was out for her own gain.

Rose was in constant tears at this uprooting of her home, and poor luckless Auguste loafed about asking: "And me, what am I going to have? What! Give millions to the State, and to their son not even a pair of trousers?"

In the midst of chaos and discontent, Rodin grew steadily more feeble. He had always avoided coping with the material world, and now preferred to let things slide.

Christmas came and passed. The New Year of 1917 brought bitter cold and no signs of peace. France suffered intensely from lack of fuel, and the Villa des Brillants had no heating of any sort.

Then the strangest of many comedies was played in the little frozen villa. Rodin had been approached by several people on the subject of providing for his "femme." If he died before Rose, the State would grant her no pension unless



they had been legally married. So he was finally persuaded. After living with the good lady for fifty years, he must make her an honest woman. "Well what does it matter now?" Shrugging his great shoulders, the old Pagan resigned himself to this unexpected end to their strange romance.

Rose twittered with excitement. She was to become a wife and Mme Rodin at last. St. Peter would open the gates of heaven when he saw her marriage lines! She had not known such happiness since the far-off days in Belgium when her man was just an artisan who might or might not bring home his day's pay. "Rose, we're getting married." How many years had she waited for those words, how often had she heard them in dreams! But Rodin did not trouble. Other people arranged their betrothal. Stroking his beard, the old sculptor watched her sardonically. "Women always get their own way in the end," he murmured.

Outside it was freezing, and coal seemed unprocurable. Marcelle sent urgent requests to various authorities, but obtained only promises. The guardian who was supposed to watch over Rodin's treasures and survey visitors spent his time chop-

ping branches to make a small fire. The kindly man muttered as he worked that the government accepted all the old sculptor's possessions, and then left him to die of cold. Everyone crept about, numb and coughing, while Rose cried from the sheer pain of prolonged chill. "Ah, Madame, c'est la guerre!"

A trunk was sent to the Hotel Biron to collect linen and clothing that Rodin had left behind, but most of his personal belongings had disappeared.

Rodin and his poor old fiancée hobbled around, wrapped in all the clothing they could find, while the big drawing room at Meudon was prepared for their marriage. Even a buffet was installed, and on January 28 all seemed ready, when a terrific explosion shook every window. The factory at Puteaux had blown up! The central heating apparatus at the villa had not been used for lack of fuel, so the pipes immediately burst, and icy water flooded the drawing room.

Rodin and his fiancée came in to inspect the festive scene, and stared gloomily around, shivering in their mufflers and heavy clothes. As the chimney was blocked, there seemed no way of warming or drying the room. "My life has always

been like this," growled Rodin. But physical discomfort could not now dampen Rose's spirits.

Their son, the unfortunate Auguste, was mildly excited at the prospect of being illegitimate no longer. "I will be able to say I have a father and mother like other people!" he confided pathetically. But Marcelle had the bitter task of breaking his hopes, and explaining that on account of his age he could not take the name of Rodin. A legitimate heir would have been inconvenient to the State! Nini, who had hoped to get financial aid, lost her temper and flared up, "You contrived that. You're like the rest of them and they paid you to tell. Well! We'll see tomorrow."

The secretary begged them not to make a scene, for fear Auguste might be entirely disinherited.

The day of the nuptials dawned. Rodin pointed to Rose. "There's a woman with nothing but marriage in her head!" "Yes, my dear, it certainly is my turn at last," the old lady smiled happily. Then suddenly she flared up: "Tell me, mon vieux, do you remember the times you beat me and said, 'you will yield you dirty slut, you will yield?'" Her husband-to-be grinned and admired himself in the mirror.

A maid had been hired to add the finishing touches to Rose's appearance, but the bride firmly refused to have her nose powdered. "I have never done that," she announced in tones of conventional respectability, "and I never shall."

At about ten in the morning, the old couple installed themselves in the icy drawing room. Sitting side by side with a rug over their knees, they huddled together for warmth. The mayor, the ministers, and witnesses began to arrive, while Rodin, amused by so much attention, greeted all comers as "dear friends." Auguste wore his usual anxious expression, while Nini had dolled herself up with gloves and bits of lace around her neck.

The proceedings began, Rose sitting very straight and solemn, while her paramour's naughty old eyes twinkled and wandered perpetually towards the well-larded buffet. They had both intended to say something appropriate to *Monsieur le maire*, but at the important moment their memories became blank. There was a slight stir when the part about faithfulness of husband and wife was read, but Rodin could not be discomfited. Fortunately, the ceremony was short. No one noticed Auguste, sitting pale and stiff on his chair.

At midday the last guest departed. Auguste and Nini walked forlornly along the hard white roads, and recounted their troubles on every doorstep they passed. Auguste's complaints aroused pity among the kindly common people, who cared well for their own children, so that workmen and housewives waxed indignant, and were soon shouting insults to each other about the heartlessness of Rodin and his wife. The disgruntled pair finally stopped at a bistro for lunch, and were airing their grievances to the sympathetic proprietor, when Auguste suddenly realized the futility of it all, pushed his plate away, and buried his face in his hands. The son of Rodin abandoned himself to hysterical weeping.

The day after her marriage, Rose began plotting. "Now that I am really Madame Auguste Rodin, I will exert my right! Ah, I'm not so stupid as he! I won't give things away to anybody."

Never in this world had there been a stranger honeymoon. Neither friends nor officials could procure an ounce of coal, so the old couple stayed in bed from morning till night, holding hands be-





tween their two little beds, and talking about the past, about their poverty and their youth. Then Rose became lively and social. She sat up in bed, wrapped in white woolens, and invited every woman she knew to visit her. She could entertain openly at last as Madame Rodin.

Rodin, liking to be alone, had set apart for himself one room where he was not to be disturbed. In this retreat he kept his papers, money, and "thoughts," scribbled on various scraps of paper. The documents had all been carefully arranged with the help of a Japanese servant who could not speak French. Rodin chose him for this very reason so that in one room at least the silence might not be disturbed by chatter.

In vain, Rodin wrote to the authorities. "We are dying of cold, and my poor wife is ill." Rose's cough grew steadily worse. Her doctor prescribed bottles of ineffectual cough syrup, and a trained nurse had to be installed.

One day in February when she had been married just over a fortnight she seemed better and received some friends. They found her talking with unusual calmness about her death and last wishes.



She wanted to be remembered to all her friends in Champagne—Champagne and the vineyards, the sun and grapes and brown-faced peasants—then Paris; evening by the Seine, a young sculptor offering her a bag of sweets—how far away it seemed!

"I don't mind dying," she murmured, "but it's leaving my man. Who will look after him? What will happen to the poor thing?" Having imagined Rodin would die before her, she had often said, "Then I will leave this house and live alone in my cottage in the middle of the garden. But I want to go on till the end."

Next morning, January 14, Rose was gasping for breath. The doctor failed to arrive, and the nurse did not know what to do. In silence, with misery and terror in his eyes, Rodin watched his good Rose dying. Auguste was summoned from pumping water in the garden. Going to his mother's bedside for a few minutes, he watched her, seemingly unmoved. Perhaps his feelings were blunted by the misery his parents had let him endure. Coming out of the sick room, he said in expressionless tones, "Mama isn't doing well—but she's pretty tough." Then he returned to work.

Midday passed, and still Rodin watched his wife's struggle from the bed opposite. Her wrinkled, suffering face smiled piteously, and he realized the depth of their affection.

In the swiftness caused by intense emotion, he recalled the details of their past life together, the golden lights in her eyes when they walked through spring evenings, the warmth of her body when he ached from overwork and loneliness. He saw her hanging out the washing at Ixelles, the wind ruffling her hair and carrying away snatches of her song. He recalled her, stamping with rage over lovely Camille. For the first time, he appreciated her faithful devotion through the years. And Rose had come to this; their strange love affair was ending at last.

At half past twelve she died. They had not been married a month.

Auguste and Nini were hurriedly fetched, and Rodin stood with bowed head in the middle of the room. Tears ran down his cheeks.

"I'm all alone now," he said, like a lost child. It was the first time Rose had given him cause to weep.

That afternoon, two of Mme Rodin's cousins arrived, and with peasant avarice began to squabble over what money she had left.

Rodin sat by his dead wife for a long time. Kissing her cold, white face, he murmured, "How beautiful. She is as beautiful as an antique." That was the highest praise he could give. Returning to his room, he philosophized on the mystery of life. "After studying it for years, one has to depart without a glimmer of understanding."

Meanwhile, Auguste continued to ask querulously why the law would not recognize him as his father's son.

Rose was laid out for five days, and Rodin frequently escaped from his new Russian nurse to visit her. The transparent beauty of his wife amazed him. "She was good," he reflected.

On February 19, 1917, the funeral took place, with few attendants. Rodin and his son followed the hearse along the frozen roads. The earth was hard as stone. It seemed as if no green, living thing could ever push its way to the sun again. As it was impossible to dig a grave, Rose was laid temporarily in the vault at Meudon.

For a time Rodin showed himself almost human

to his boy. The old man even called Auguste "my child," and helped him with his engravings. But soon after the funeral, Rose's two cousins installed themselves at Meudon and undertook to run the villa. Disliking their company, Auguste visited his father less often.

Never having lived in the midst of such a racket, the sculptor was steadily enfeebled. There was domestic chaos, and Rodin, who had few diversions apart from eating, often claimed he could find no food in the house.

And still the war continued. The trained nurse, a Russian refugee, went off to have a baby and write wild, incomprehensible letters to the bewildered sculptor. Like many others at that time, she was in a state of nervous hysteria.

Rodin's new nurse was clean, efficient, and bad-tempered. Two days after arriving, she had poked her nose into every corner and quarreled with every person in sight. Auguste she called a servant, and he retaliated with diverse remarks about her moral habits, while Nini swore fluently at the world in general.

The nurse showed some respect to Rodin, but was very strict nevertheless. It did not seem

likely the sculptor would survive the winter, yet he was not allowed to eat as he pleased, drink the wine on which he had been brought up, or go out when the sun shone to dawdle around his beloved studio.

The only topics discussed within his hearing were medicines and money—he who had lived in a dream world with Dante and Michelangelo! It was hardly surprising his mind began to wander. He thought of Rose, lying so still and quiet. Shutting his eyes, the old man pictured a heaven where angels, saints, nymphs, and fauns danced in happy confusion.

Was it Venus whose smile was like the silvery light of dawn? Or was it the Madonna?

Old Rodin slept.

## *No Stillness, No Silence*

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IN APRIL, lawyers and witnesses arrived to supervise the signing of Rodin's will, and henceforth the sculptor was confined at Meudon—alone with the two cousins and his nurse, three glum women ceaselessly sewing. They were tall and gaunt, and had to support the massive old man when he visited the remains of his collections. He christened them his "Three Fates."

Spring trailed her restless fingers over the earth, and Rodin sat by his bedroom window, watching the hawthorn and lilac bloom. He thought of the orchards of Normandy, heavy with beauty, of black, gnarled branches weighted with blossom, and petal-covered grass. A green gauze spread

the promise of corn over the fields, and soon cattle would browse knee-deep in pasture. Brown-skinned peasants smiled, and turned their faces to the sun.

Whence comes this loveliness of sea and sky and land, wondered Rodin, as he had wondered in his youth.

Summer came, and there was stillness in the woods at noon, and the peace of long shadowy evenings. Then once again the trees grew scarlet and bronze; leaves fell, and men shivered at the prospect of another terrible winter. Still the war continued, and Rodin grew too tired and weak to worry over the slaughter of "beautiful men" any longer.

There was a proposal to transport the sculptor to the Midi, but the doctor insisted he would die on the way, and tried instead to remove his patient to the well-heated Hotel Biron. But the Guardian of the Rodin Museum (as it was now called) refused to have the ancient sculptor.

Rodin had always avoided medicines and treatments. Rose cured his aches and colds with old wives' brews which she had learned to concoct when a girl from herbal receipts handed down for gener-

ations among the peasantry. The old man missed her sorely now, and grew bored and then exasperated by the fuss created around him.

On November 12, his 77th birthday, the sculptor sat shivering before a small fire of sticks. Noticing a pale streak of sunlight, he cast the rug off his knees and insisted on going for a walk. The inevitable cousins accompanied him.

His hillside garden looked bleak, and damp brown leaves rustled on the paths. A wind blew over the hills, and dark clouds were gathering in the distance. Rodin looked over the valley he knew so well, and listened to the whispering trees.

Suddenly the wind blew strongly, and drops of water began to fall. The cousins seized him briskly, one on each side, and hurried him home, but it was too late. The storm broke overhead, and descending torrents drenched them all.

As the fire had gone out, Rodin had to change his clothes in an unheated room. His face grew flushed, and he went shivering to bed. Next morning the doctor found him suffering from a bad chill, fatal in his enfeebled condition.

Rodin was very quiet, and seemed to know it was the end. After several days, he fell into a



coma. A number of self-appointed officials arrived to discuss the distribution of his personal belongings. Mementos, portraits, and decorations went to the Rodin Museum, plaster casts to the Trocadero, his luggage and furniture to the cousins, and only his watch to Auguste.

The nurse gave a hypodermic, in hopes of awakening the old man enough to sign the codicil to his will, but he remained inert, so the witnesses signed a document declaring that Rodin had wished to write his name but was incapable. Actually, he had never made a sign, and was past caring whether or not his wretched son was deprived of the little that still remained his heritage.

All next day the sculptor did not move, yet life remained in the tired, old body and he breathed through one more night. On November 17, 1917, shortly before dawn, Rodin's brave spirit quietly left the world where he had struggled and finally triumphed.

Soon friends and press reporters crowded to the house. Mme la Duchesse appeared, and kissed the hands that were strong even in death.

A few days later Rodin was carried out into the garden that he had made his retreat. Black-coated

men stood holding their top hats respectfully. Black-veiled women staggered against an icy wind, and over the hills and valleys blew a gale. Far below, the Seine surged by in white, angry tumult, and Paris was hid in a silver mist. Overhead the clouds raced, and small birds tossed like leaves in the tempestuous air.

There was no stillness, no silence. The roar of nature swept over all things, drowning human laughter and human sorrow. Even the trees danced to the passionate harmony of soil and sky. Rodin was slowly carried out and laid beside his faithful Rose. Deep in the earth they laid him, deep in the good earth that he had loved and understood so well.

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## Chronology

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- 1840 Auguste Rodin born at 3 rue de l'Arbalète, November 12.
- 1848 Revolution. Louis Philippe abdicated. Second Republic declared.
- 1849 Auguste Rodin sent to his uncle's school at Beauvais.
- 1852 Second Empire.
- 1854 Auguste Rodin returned to Paris to choose a profession. Entered La Petite Ecole and began to study drawing.
- 1857 Auguste Rodin failed to enter the Ecole des Beaux Arts.
- 1858 Rodin failed a second time.
- 1859 Rodin failed a third time.
- 1860 Maria died. Rodin entered a monastery.
- 1864 Rodin gave up employment with the ornament maker and became assistant to Carrier-Belleuse. *Man with the Broken Nose* rejected by the Salon.

- 1865 Rodin met Marie-Rose Beuret.
- 1866 Little Auguste was born.
- 1870 Siege of Paris.
- 1871 Rodin went to Brussels. His mother died.
- 1875 Rodin made his first visit to Italy.
- 1876 *Man with the Broken Nose* exhibited at Salon.
- 1877 Rodin returned to Paris with *The Bronze Age*. An outburst followed.
- 1878 Universal Exhibition. Decoration of Trocadero.
- 1879 Rodin engaged by Carrier-Belleuse to design vases at Sèvres.
- 1880 *The Bronze Age* and *St. John the Baptist* bought by the State.
- 1881 Rodin visited England for the first time. Stayed with Legros.
- 1900 Universal Exhibition. The Rodin Pavilion erected.
- 1901 Final outbursts of criticism in Venice and Rome.
- 1902 Rodin received with demonstrations in Prague and in London. *St. John the Baptist* was presented to the Victoria and Albert Museum. Banquet at the Cafe Royal presided over by Wyndham.
- 1903 Henley died. Rodin was made Commander in the Legion of Honor. Whistler died and Rodin was elected President of the International Society of Painters, Sculptors, and Engravers in his stead.
- 1904 Rodin was fêted at the Cafe Royal to celebrate his Presidency. Mme la Marquise de C— came into Rodin's life.

- 1906 Rodin granted an interview with King Edward in London. Mr. Anthony Ludovici became his secretary. Rataplan was bought.
- 1907 Rodin received D.C.L. from Oxford. Marcelle Tirel became his secretary.
- 1908 King Edward visited Meudon.
- 1909 Rodin Gallery opened in Metropolitan Museum, New York.
- 1910 Paul Gsell wrote *Entretiens Réunis avec Rodin*.
- 1911 Rodin had finished scenes with Madame la Duchesse. He thought of making over his works to the State.
- 1912 Nijinsky first danced *L'Après-midi d'un faune*, May 29.
- 1914 Loan Exhibition at Grosvenor House. War broke out. *August*: Rodin went to London. *September*: Rodin presented his works to the Victoria and Albert Museum. *October*: Rodin returned to Paris. *November 3*: Rodin left for Italy.
- 1915 Rodin returned from Italy, *February 27*: Rose was ill. *March*: Rodin went to Rome to model the Pope. *April 6*: Rodin returned disappointed. *May 27*: Rodin ill. Money troubles, *July* and *August*.
- 1916 Rodin's antiques and works were signed away to the State in return for a pension, *September 13*. Rodin and Rose married, *January 29*. Rose died, *February 14*. Rodin signed his will, *April 25*.
- 1917 Rodin died, *November 17*.

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MADAME LA  
MARQUISE DE C—



RODIN IN  
ENGLAND

